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CHURCH ORDINANCES

FROM THE LAYMANS STANDPOINT

BY

CAPT. SETON CHURCHILL.

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PREFACE.

I OFFER the contents of this book to the public, trusting that He who can use the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, to bring to nought things that are, may use it for His honour and glory, and for the building up of His children. Directly an individual is savingly brought to a knowledge of Christ as his Saviour, his first desire will doubtless be to unite himself with others, who have embraced the same blessed hope of salvation. But, to whatever body he seeks to attach himself, he will find that each corporate institution is bound together by some external ordinances, in which he will be required to participate. Two of the ordinances I have treated of, are the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, appointed by our Saviour Himself when on earth; so that we may fairly presume that they are of sufficient importance to be worth considering. The third ordinance which I have dealt with,

though not appointed by our Saviour Himself, is, I venture to think, if rightly understood, only second in importance to the other two, being the link which unites them.

I have lately received a letter from an undergraduate at one of our universities, just about to be ordained, who had read the chapter on Confirmation, which was originally published in a separate pamphlet. In thanking me for the views therein expressed, he said, "I have never had very definite ideas as to Confirmation before." I find that many, even of the upper classes, are not unlike that undergraduate, as to their knowledge of the benefits of Christian ordinances. Beyond the mere fact of its being a universal custom to attend to the external ordinances of their Church, and that a blessing in some general undefined way is expected to be the result, many would be at a great loss to give a good reason of their observance of them, to say why they had their children baptized, or sent them to be confirmed, or went themselves to the Holy Communion.

One of the leading clergy in London told me that, for many years of his life, he had never once come across a book on the subject of the ordinances, that he felt any pleasure in recommending, or could give to his candidates for Confirmation. Many of the books on the subject, dealt rather with the abuses that had grown out of them, while others gave an altogether too exaggerated view of the benefits to be derived from them. I have en-

deavoured to bear this in mind throughout the consideration of the two parts that deal with Baptism and Holy Communion, and have devoted the first part of these two sections to the object and benefits of the two sacraments. In the latter part only have I dealt with the abuses, thus keeping the two distinct. The first part therefore of each section appeals more to those who neglect, or who at all events do not sufficiently estimate aright the benefits of the ordinances; while the latter part appeals to those who hold exaggerated views of their benefits, which are not supported by the authority of the Word of God.

Though things have very much improved lately, with regard to the spread of sound literature, giving Scriptural views of the different ordinances, it is remarkable how very few books of this kind have been written by the laity, though as a matter of fact they have to participate in these ordinances as much as the clergy; and it is by no means necessary that they should take exactly the same view of them. There are upwards of 18,000,000 English-speaking people, professedly in communion with the Church of England throughout the world, and not many more than 25,000 clergy; yet the books by the latter, are out of all proportion more numerous than that of the former. When one turns to other callings in life, such for instance as that of the army, the names of many writers will occur who are not professional men. Among all the war correspondents

I met out in South Africa, I can indeed only recall one, who had had any previous connection with the army.

In the profession of arms, however, it is not necessary that civilians should have any knowledge, and, therefore, one would not have been surprised if they had altogether avoided the subject. But with regard to religion and religious ordinances, it is different. Every layman who even professes and calls himself a Christian, has, consciously or unconsciously, participated in one of the ordinances, and many continually take part in them; so that they ought to be informed on the subject, and to take a personal interest therein. Experience, however, leads one to think that their knowledge is sometimes of a somewhat vague and limited nature.

The eternal laws of retribution demand that if law is neglected, a penalty, sooner or later, must be paid. If the Church neglects to instruct its younger members rightly on the externals which accompany religion, they will naturally be neglected, and then, though for a time we may enjoy immunity, the penalty will be demanded by a reaction setting in, and a grossly superstitious view being attached to those ordinances. If, on the other hand, their benefits are exaggerated or misrepresented, the common sense of man will revolt against this extreme, and then they will be utterly disregarded from an opposite reason.

The human eye may grow weary with watching

the eagle, or other bird of strong wing, soaring on high. Its inherent strength and self-sustaining power may make it seem as if there, indeed, was one who could bid defiance to the law of the force of gravity. We know, however, that it is but a question of time, and even the strongest will grow weary, to say nothing of the demand of a nature that requires food. That bird will have to descend to this terrestrial globe like other mundane creatures, and show that it is governed by the same laws. A well-organised party may push its way by dint of united action and persevering energy, and thus spread abroad any set of views. For a time all may appear to succeed, but the looker-on may rest assured that such success is only temporary. Extremes inevitably lead to reactions. Religious men are no exceptions to the general rule.

I think it was John Newton who once remarked that the best plan to keep tares out of a sack was to fill it first with wheat. As long as vagueness or ignorance exists on the subject of the ordinances, we need not be surprised at many availing themselves of the opportunity to spread erroneous doctrines. If the spread of exaggerated views regarding the benefits of the different ordinances, arises from ignorance of the masses regarding the Scriptural teaching on the subject, it stands to reason that the best way to counteract the errors of the present day is to spread abroad definite teaching on the positive benefits to be derived therefrom. I do not

for one moment contend, that we should neglect to attack error in whatever form we find it. On the contrary, I have gone at some length into the consideration of the abuses that have, like parasites, grown up around these sacred institutions. Ultimately, however, we must trust to the inculcation of *positive* truths, showing the true benefits to be derived from external ordinances, rather than to the *negative* form of teaching, which seeks to expose error, and to show what the ordinances do *not* teach. I have endeavoured to act on the policy adopted by Nehemiah in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, who directed that the sword and trowel should go together: "Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded" (Neh. iv. 17, 18).

Having adopted this policy, it is hardly necessary to add that I have been unable to refrain from touching on some of the burning questions of the day. Nor have I desired to do so, for I most fully endorse the words of the Rev. William Odom. "We much regret the cause for it, but feel assured that if conducted in the right spirit, controversy tends to the removal of error and the firmer establishment of truth. 'Ring out the false; ring in the true.' Our Lord and His Apostles preached the truth; they also exposed and condemned error." The Apostle tells us true charity "rejoiceth in the truth."

I believe greatly in the power that accompanies the truth when spoken in love. The old saying that

> "A man convinced against his will
> Is of the same opinion still,"

is more true in religious controversies than in perhaps anything else. Harsh words only lead to still further estrangements and misunderstandings among those who hold opposing principles, while the truth, fairly and lovingly proclaimed, often wins over the halting and undecided, who might as easily be driven off into the enemy's camp.

Nor does Divine truth demand that a breach should be made in one part of God's law, with the object of defending another part. The ark of God's truth will exist independently of man's defence of it. Too often a hasty hand has been put forth to prevent it from falling, and too often has spiritual death been the result. Nothing is so deadening to the spiritual life as to be ever looking out for the weak points in the harness of one's opponents. It is at all times easier to fight than to pray. It is recorded that Moses' uplifted hands, which symbolised prayer, grew weary; but we are not told this concerning the hand of Joshua that wielded the sword. It is ever more in accordance with the constitution of human nature to fight than to pray. But it is the latter alone which gives us "power with God and man."

A great many of the present controversies arise

from a misunderstanding of phrases and expressions, but that cannot be said of all of them. Of some it must be admitted that after having made all the allowances we can for ill-defined expressions, and loose methods of explaining them, we are brought face to face with the fact that there still remain certain points on which a great divergence of views exist, and on which it is most important that clearly defined teaching should be propounded. It is only on these more important points that I have touched, and in doing so I have endeavoured as far as possible to deal with principles rather than with persons; and even when I have had to depart from this rule, I trust I have not forgotten the truth conveyed in Tennyson's line—

"But soiling another will never make oneself clean."

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CHURCH ORDINANCES.

CHAPTER I.

BAPTISM—ITS BENEFITS.

An old missionary in India told me that once he visited a strange neighbourhood, and was surprised to find a great many of the natives there calling themselves Quakers. He came to the conclusion that there must be a very influential and successful body of missionaries belonging to that persuasion in the place. On mentioning this to a brother missionary, who knew the neighbourhood well, he was told that there had been some Quakers there, and that, as they did not insist on compliance with the rite of Baptism when an adult wished to become a Christian, a great many Hindoos took the name of that body, to avoid the persecution which always follows on Baptism. It is hardly necessary to add that these so-called Christians, who shrank from confessing Christ in the waters of Baptism, proved themselves to be utterly worthless, and nothing better than the heathen around. Their

object seems to have been to reap the advantages of both the Christians and Hindoos, without incurring the reproach of either.

It is a remarkable fact that not only among the Hindoos, but among the pagans of Rome, and the professors of other false systems, very little notice has ever been taken of a man's views, provided those views were not put into practice. A man may believe almost anything he likes—indeed, he may say almost anything he likes; but once let him by some one personal act give expression to his views, and he at once incurs the bitter hatred, animosity, and persecution of his former co-religionists.

Our Saviour, who knew better than man what was in the human heart, for this reason, doubtless, appointed an external ceremony to be performed, when a disciple, by faith and an internal change of heart, became a member of His invisible Church. We cannot see a man's heart, or tell the condition of it; but we do know that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and the man acteth. His fellow-creatures cannot tell what his faith is; but when they see him performing a certain external rite at the risk of great persecution, the presumption is, that the outward act is but an indication of the inward convictions.

When Nicodemus came to our Saviour, he was told plainly that unless he was born of water and of the Spirit he could not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. He is only mentioned three times in the

Bible, and it is a remarkable fact that each time it is recorded of him that it was he who "came to Jesus *by night.*" He was evidently a timid character, and, though under strong convictions, was afraid to confess Christ. He came by night, so that he might not be seen speaking to Jesus, for fear of the Jews. All this our Saviour clearly saw; hence that strong expression that he must be born not only of the Holy Spirit, but also must publicly profess his faith in the waters of Baptism. Our Saviour did but say to him what He had already said to His disciples, "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I deny before My Father which is in heaven."

In England, Baptism has quite ceased to be a test of reality, as the exception is to meet an unbaptized person. Hence we lose very much the meaning and force of our Saviour's words to Nicodemus. Possibly He would have used other language had He been speaking to such a timid one as Nicodemus in the present day. We are not, however, without our tests, though Baptism may have ceased to be one of them. The schoolboy who is not ashamed to read his Bible, the soldier who is not ashamed to kneel down and pray in a crowded barrack-room, the communicant who for the first time remains behind when others are leaving the church, the man of business who speaks out and

says he will not do wrong though it is in accordance with trade customs,—all know what it is, metaphorically, if not actually, to have the finger of scorn pointed at them, and experience what it is to confess Christ before men.

It is remarkable what strong language is used in the Word of God, regarding the subject of confessing Christ. In Rom. x. 9 the apostle says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Again, 2 Tim. i. 12, "If we deny Him, He also will deny us." Luke ix. 26, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He shall come in His glory." Luke xii. 8, "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." It was, no doubt, the strong language of the Word of God that led the fathers of the Reformation to say that "Baptism is *generally* necessary to salvation." But it must be admitted that, emphatic as the language is, it is not more so than the language of the Bible, so that none need stumble at it, nor have they a right to attribute more extreme views on the importance of Baptism than is warranted by the Scriptures to the Reformers.

Some there are who would like to substitute the word "absolutely" for "generally," and make it read that Baptism is *absolutely* necessary to salvation. But the thief on the cross was not baptized, and yet we hope to meet him in heaven. The Quakers do not baptize with water, and yet, in spite of all their errors, they have had among their number some of the holiest and best men this world has seen. Though Baptism is not absolutely necessary to salvation, there can be no doubt that, as the initiatory rite into the Christian Church, and as a means of confessing Christ publicly, the very greatest importance has been attached to it by Christ, His apostles, the early and the modern Church. Our missionaries in India consider it of great importance. I remember once at a very large conference of missionaries in India, one of their number propounding certain views, bordering on those of the Quakers. The chairman, who happened to be a Presbyterian, called on the whole body of missionaries, about half of whom were Churchmen, and half of whom were English Nonconformists, Germans, and Americans of various bodies, to signify by standing up, whether or not they approved of such sentiments. The whole body arose and expressed a very strong feeling on the subject of the necessity of Baptism.

Long before the coming of our Lord and the introduction of the Christian dispensation, the Jews were in the habit of receiving into their body

proselytes from among the heathen Gentiles. The rite of initiation was, as we are told in the Word of God, circumcision.

In addition, however, to the rite of circumcision, many great authorities tell us that every man, woman, and child had to be washed or baptized. It appears that the Jews held that they had been *nationally* baptized in the Red Sea. The Apostle Paul alludes to this when he says in 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." It was on this ground that they required Baptism in the case of proselytes. Our Lord seems to have taken hold of this institution which had grown up among the Jews, to make it the initiatory rite of His Church. He abolished circumcision, which was the main feature of the old initiatory rite. Circumcision spoke of the necessity of the sentence of death being written on nature. But the great Antitype had come. He suffered death in the flesh for all men. There was no longer any necessity for teaching this, as the great event at Calvary proclaimed that fact to the world. Therefore circumcision was allowed to fall into disuse; but the mere accidental custom of bathing or baptizing, that had grown up in connection with it, was appointed henceforth to be the new rite of admission into the Christian Church.

The use of water has no doubt a very deep meaning; it is a tacit acknowledgment by the Church in all ages that the natural heart of man needs cleansing; or, put in the language of the prophet, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Is. lxiv. 6). When we baptize the infant, and thus make it a member of the outward and visible Church on earth, we tacitly admit the natural depravity of the human heart, and proclaim the fact that the unconscious babe, the very picture of innocence, needs the cleansing power of the precious blood of Christ, as truly as the adult who has just come out of the darkness and impurities of heathenism.

Dean Stanley,[1] the late Dean of Westminster, says, "By choosing water and the use of the bath, He indicated one chief characteristic of the Christian religion. Whatever else the Christian was to be, Baptism, the use of water, showed that he was to be clean and pure, in body, soul, and spirit."

Before passing on, it may be as well to mention that there is a body of Christians called Baptists, numbering nearly 9,000,000 people, who altogether object to the baptizing of unconscious infants. Their argument is that the Word of God only speaks of those being baptized who were old enough[2] to profess a personal faith, and that we

[1] Christian Institutions, p. 6.

[2] I have heard it argued that, as whole families are mentioned as having been baptized, the presumption must be that some babies

have, therefore, no right to baptize any but such persons. While fully admitting that the Bible does not mention the Baptism of any but adults, I fail to see why we should arrive at such a conclusion.

Dean Stanley very truly points out that, though no mention is made of the Baptism of the infant children of believers, neither is there any mention made of the Baptism of the adult children of Christian parents. Considering that the history of the New Testament ranges over nearly ninety years, from the birth of our Saviour to the death of John, and that nearly sixty years must have elapsed between the death of Christ and the last epistle, this in itself is remarkable. There surely must have been a large number of adults, the offspring of Christian parents, who were converted, but whose adult baptisms were not recorded.

The Rev. A. R. Faussett says, "Infant Baptism tacitly superseded infant circumcision, just as the Christian Lord's Day gradually superseded the Jewish Sabbath, without our having any express commands for, or record of, the transference. The

must have been among them. This is not a fair presumption, and seems to me a weak argument, which our cause does not require. The very fact of a whole family being mentioned seems to imply that not only were the parents converted, but that their grown-up children were also gathered in. It is very unusual in India to see a whole family composed of parents and grown-up children embrace Christianity. In seasons of great blessing, however, such cases do occur. The mere fact of a man and his wife becoming Christians, and getting their very young children baptized, would not be so worthy of comment.

setting aside of circumcision and of Sabbaths, in the case of the Gentiles, was, indeed, expressly commanded by the apostles and St. Paul; but the substitution of Infant Baptism and the Lord's Day were tacitly adopted, not expressly enacted." Surely the *onus probandi* rests with those who assert, that we have no right to admit children into the outward and visible organisation on earth. We know that in the Mosaic dispensation, children were admitted into the professing body of the worshippers of the true God—that body called by Stephen, "The Church in the Wilderness." We know also that before the time of Moses, even as far back as the time of the patriarch Abraham, children were admitted by the rite of circumcision. The rite may have been changed, for, as I have already endeavoured to show, circumcision was only suited to the times before the death of Christ; but nowhere are we forbidden to apply the new seal of Baptism to children. As it was so expressly commanded in the patriarchal, and in the Mosaic dispensation, that children were to be admitted, we should at least expect as distinct a command that they were not to be admitted under the new dispensation, had God so intended it. The fathers of our reformed Church carefully went into the question, and though they refrained from saying a word against those who differed from them, yet they said, "The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

Most people will agree that He who took little ones in His arms, and blessed them, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, *for of such is the kingdom of heaven*," would not have broken up the old long-established precedent without a very good reason, and had that reason existed, He would doubtless have given it to us. In the absence of any instructions to the contrary, the early Church naturally acted on a precedent that had existed from the time of Abraham; for circumcision, be it remembered, was in existence long before the time of the Mosaic legal dispensation.

The Dean of Peterborough, in preaching on this subject of Infant Baptism, says:—"They (the disciples) had heard His gracious invitation, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' They had seen His significant gesture, when He took them up in His arms, laid His hand upon them, and blessed them. Could they for one moment have questioned whether children were to be admitted into the Christian covenant? If under the law they were not excluded, they could not be excluded under the gospel. If that strait and narrow economy were large enough for them, how should the new covenant, with all its richness and fulness of blessing, be shut primarily against those towards whom Christ had manifested, in such a striking manner, His love? And would it not have been necessary for our Lord, speaking to Jews—accustomed to the circumcision

of their own children, accustomed to the baptism of the children of proselytes—would it not have been necessary for Him to have said to them in express terms, 'Do not baptize infants, baptize only adults,' if He had intended to lay this prohibition upon them? Here, unquestionably, not to prohibit was to allow. The command could only have been understood in one way, and we have the almost unbroken testimony of antiquity that it was so understood."

The same body of Christians that contend so earnestly for the denial of the rite of Baptism to the infant children of believers, also advocate as strongly the necessity for the complete immersion of the person who is being baptized, in contradistinction to the custom of sprinkling which has grown out of what doubtless was the original custom. On this point our Church does not differ from them. On the contrary, it is laid down that the minister shall take the child, and "shall dip it in the water." Sprinkling is only allowed as an alternative under certain circumstances. The alternative has grown to be the usual custom, but the principle of immersion is maintained, and any parent who attaches great importance to the *modus operandi* may insist on it. Those who hold so rigidly to immersion differ from us, because we allow of an alternative, as we do not consider the amount of water to be of much importance. In very cold countries, where the temperature is below freezing point, and in very hot countries, where water even

for drinking purposes is scarce, it would be impossible to get enough water in which to immerse a person.

Dean Stanley says, "For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practice of Baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word 'baptize,' that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water. That practice is still, as we have seen, continued in Eastern Churches. In the Western Church it still lingers amongst Roman Catholics in the solitary instance of the cathedral of Milan, amongst Protestants in the numerous sect of the Baptists. It lasted long into the Middle Ages. . . . Even in the Church of England it is still observed in theory. The rubric in the Public Baptism of Infants enjoins that, unless for special cases, they are to be dipped, not sprinkled. Edward the Sixth and Elizabeth were both immersed. But since the beginning of the seventeenth century the practice has become exceeding rare. With the few exceptions just mentioned, the whole of the Western Churches have now substituted for the ancient bath, the ceremony of letting fall a few drops of water on the face. The reason of the change is obvious. The practice of immersion, though peculiarly suited to the Southern and Eastern countries, for which it was designed, was not found seasonable in the countries of the North and West. Not by any decree of Council or Parlia-

ment, but by a general sentiment of Christian liberty, this remarkable change has been effected."

In 1 Cor. vii. 14, the apostle urges the believing wife or husband not to forsake the heathen husband or wife for the children's sake. He says, "Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." The idea is one, no doubt, borrowed from Jewish times. The Jews were said to be in a holy condition. That is to say, they had great privileges which the heathen had not. In speaking to parents the apostle urges believers not to forsake their little ones; as would be the case if left with the heathen parent, for they would thus be deprived of the benefits of Christian education and training. "Now are they holy," says he. That is, now by your remaining with them, your words, your life, and your example have a sanctifying effect, and your little ones consequently are in a state or condition from which great results, even their conversion, may reasonably be expected.

This verse gives support to the view that by the Baptism of infants they are brought into covenant relationship with God.[1] The idea of a covenant in connection with Baptism is, I know, objected to by

[1] The Shorter Catechism used by the Presbyterians in Scotland, and drawn up by a committee of the Westminster Assembly of Divines in the year 1647 A.D., says—"Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our engrafting into Christ, and *partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace*, and our engagement to be the Lord's."

some; as it appears to savour of legal times, and of a contract being made with God. Possibly this may be because the idea, in connection with a covenant, is not thoroughly understood. There can be no doubt that there is such a thing as the "covenant of grace," in which man receives unmerited blessings from God. The idea of a covenant is a very old one. Jacob entered into a covenant with God, in which he undertook to do the will of God, provided God supplied his need. Job made a covenant with his eyes; doubtless looking to God for help. Even in modern times we read of people who have drawn up contracts with God and signed their names to them. They undertake to serve God, if He will give them grace according to their need. In all ages there have been covenanters with God. The idea is not to stimulate God to perform His part, but to stimulate themselves to keep the conditions. Far from conveying the idea that they have power to keep their contract, it is a recognition of their own weakness, and of the necessity of providing a powerful incentive which, from time to time, will remind them of their duty towards God.

The parent sees the surrounding temptations which will assault his child in after life, and he trembles for his safety. All he can do is to cast his little one upon the Lord, publicly dedicating him to God in the waters of Baptism, and thus, as far as in him lies, make sure that his child shall be surrounded

by professing Christians, and shall be brought up to know something of the faith his father values. In this little sea-girt island of ours, with its 35,000,000 professing Christians, we do not perhaps quite realise the privilege of such a relationship. Let us, however, in imagination transplant ourselves to the midst of India, with its 250,000,000 Hindoos, Buddhists, Mahommedans, Fire-worshippers, and idolaters of various kinds, and suppose that we are all of the same colour, language, and nationality, and that the only thing which distinguishes us from our neighbours is our religion. What a small percentage of the whole we should form; and how much smaller still would be the percentage if we took China, with its 400,000,000 idolaters, as the land of our birth! The parent who, under these circumstances, desires to see his little one grow up to be a true Christian, has his child baptized. This in itself cuts off that person when grown up from all connection with the other religions. He can neither eat with the Hindoo nor marry a Mahommedan, however much he may disbelieve his own professed faith. Had he never been baptized it would have been as easy for him to accept one of the systems of false religions surrounding him, as to be a professed Christian. But by being baptized he has become a Christian in name if not in heart, and is thus cut off from surrounding evil. This associates him with others, who are Christians in something

more than mere name, besides bringing him into contact with the outward means of grace, such as the preaching of the gospel and the teaching of the Bible in his school. He may knowingly and wilfully reject the Gospel, and renounce his position as a professing Christian; but he can never be in the position of the idolater ignorant of its claims.

We are told that those who know not God's will, and do it not, will be beaten with stripes. This is a mystery beyond our human ken, and we must therefore accept it in faith. But we do know that they who know God's will, and do it not, will be beaten with many stripes. Those who have had their lot cast in Christian countries, been born of professing Christian people, surrounded by Christian privileges, taught out of the Christian's Bible, taught to worship the Christian's God, and yet have set at nought these privileges, have rejected them, neglected them, or despised them, must bear the penalty of breaking the covenant.

The privileges of Baptism are great—far greater than the majority of people who have never lived in the midst of heathenism imagine. As Bishop Oxenden says of it: "Baptism places us, as it were, in the right path, but at conversion (or regeneration) we begin to walk in it." What circumcision did for the Jew, Baptism does for the professing Christian. It distinguishes him from the heathen idolatrous nations around. It confers on him Christian

privileges. It joins him to a body of men who have the Word of God for their guide, and who profess to follow its dictates. It is ever bringing him into contact with a high standard of holiness and purity; and though it cannot make him holy or pure, it tells him of the gospel, and of the power of Him who only can cleanse us from all sin. Dr. Candlish, Professor of Systematic Theology in the Free Church College, Glasgow, says:—"Baptism is to the Christian what the colours are to the soldier—a symbol of the king and the cause that he serves, not simply reminding him of his duty, but quickening his loyalty and inspiring him with courage and high hope. As the soldier, looking to the colours as they flutter at the head of his column, is nerved to stronger, braver, more resolute effort and endurance, and is really helped to fight and conquer by the courage and patriotism that symbol of his country inspires, so the Christian, looking to the Sacrament of Baptism, the symbol of Christ's salvation, may derive from it a holy resolution to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold of eternal life. But just as the flag to an ignorant or unpatriotic eye is a mere rag of silk, and has no animating influence except to those who understand and appreciate what it symbolises, so our Christian Baptism will be a mere empty form, meaningless and powerless, unless we intelligently and believingly use it in the ways that the Bible and the nature of the case point out."

There can be no doubt that the standard of morality and holiness is purer and higher in a Christian Church, than among the heathen nations around. To be a member of a Church, even though only a mere professor, is to be surrounded by Christian privileges; and undoubtedly it has an effect in deciding the character. It is a well-known thing that the effect of joining a crack regiment, a first-class public school, a profession that has a good reputation, or any corporate institution that is held in high esteem, very materially tells upon the individual. Gradually the character of that public body moulds the mind of each one who has joined it. Members of it, jealous for its reputation, carefully guard the novice and warn each other of everything that tends to detract from its fame, or to sully its honour. These restraints—which are multiplied in a Christian Church—are of no small advantage in forming character. Sins are avoided which might otherwise have acquired a power equal to that of second nature. The apostle speaks of some who are so completely under the power of evil that they "cannot cease from sin." Though the power of the Holy Spirit is able to snap even these bands of iniquity asunder, yet, humanly speaking, there is more hope of one who has not fallen into such slavery to his own passions and appetites. It cannot be denied that, inasmuch as Baptism has often shielded and guarded the young from the evils and impurities of heathenish worshippers, it has greatly assisted in

removing obstacles, which might have proved a sore hindrance in the way of one turning from sin unto holiness.

Christian parents in England, who have a son going up to work in London, act very much on the same principle. They cannot keep him straight; but they can, and, as a rule, do, to the utmost of their ability, surround him with Christian friends and Christian privileges. They ask a minister to call and invite him to his church. They ask Christian friends to welcome him to their houses. Frequently, they get their boy to join some high-toned club, or the Young Men's Christian Association. In every way they strive to make it easy for him to do right, and hard to do wrong. They do all they can, and leave the results in God's hands.

Have we not the same idea given us in the Word of God, in the prophet's words, Isa. v. 1–4?—"My Well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; and He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein; and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and My vineyard. What could have been done more to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" The results here were disas-

trous; but has not the Owner of the vineyard a just cause of complaint, inasmuch as, while He fulfilled all the conditions necessary to the cultivation of good grapes, nothing but bad fruit appeared?

Is it not too often forgotten that the promise made to Noah (Gen. viii. 22) of the yearly growth of harvest, formed a part of God's covenant with man, and is acted on by the farmer when he ploughs the soil and casts valuable grain into the furrows? He does it on the understanding that, when certain conditions are fulfilled, certain results may reasonably be expected to follow. The old saying, that "God helps those who help themselves," is but an acknowledgment of the same truth. Man's duty is, like Paul, to plant, and, like Apollos, to water; God fulfils His part by giving the increase. There are exceptions to the rule, for even in the case of baptized children some turn out badly. That, however, is no argument against the covenant relations. There are other conditions besides the mere act of baptizing; such as believing prayer, the consistent example of a holy life in the parent, and many other things. The one condition may have been kept, while the others have been neglected. God will never prove unfaithful, and He has promised to answer believing prayer. He will honour His own appointed institutions if we, on our part, accompany those institutions with earnest believing prayer.

CHAPTER II.

BAPTISM—ITS ABUSE.

HAVING hitherto dealt only with the positive side of Baptism, and pointed out its proper use, let us pass on to the negative side of the question, and see how the simple rite of Baptism has been abused, by those who hold extreme views on the subject. Of both the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, our Church teaches that they are "outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace." When, however, the Church lost its spirituality, and the work of the Holy Spirit was less manifest in the life, the outward and visible ceremony was not only retained but magnified. At first some, possibly with the most sincere motives, magnified the rite in hope of elevating a sacred ordinance of God: as a natural consequence, however, with the majority of thoughtful minds this exaltation of the sign had a contrary effect, as it lowered the sacred and divinely-appointed symbol to the level of a mere incantation. It attributed a magical effect to the sprinkling of water; and thus in a mere

charm lost sight of the higher and more spiritual purifying, of which the water was but the type.

The doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration seems to be a strange mixture of truth and error. It is a truth, inasmuch as it recognises the fallen nature of each child. It is an error, inasmuch as it has no support from the Word of God. It appears to be a relic of the days, when magical power was supposed to be able to cast out evil spirits. Though the Church denounced the unlawful and forbidden art of exorcists, yet it was in the spirit of the age that it attributed a mysterious efficacy and power to its own institutions. The Church of Rome to this day makes use of water, oil, salt, and saliva, in baptizing infants, and seeks to exorcise the evil spirit with which the child is supposed to be possessed. The first Reformed Prayer Book in the reign of Edward VI., which some even now are trying to get reintroduced into our Church, contains the following expression in the Baptismal Service:—"Then let the Priest, looking upon the children, say, 'I command thee, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou come out, and depart from these infants, whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath vouchsafed to call to His holy Baptism, to be made members of His body and of His holy congregation. Therefore, thou cursed spirit, remember thy sentence, remember thy judgment, remember the day to be at hand wherein thou shalt burn in fire everlasting, prepared for thee and

thy angels. And presume not hereafter to exercise any tyranny towards these infants, whom Christ hath bought with His precious blood, and by this His holy Baptism calleth to be of His flock.' "

As soon as certain words are pronounced over the elements, they are accredited with the power of cleansing a soul. Who can fail to see in all this a relic of the charms and incantations of a bygone age? Our reformers entirely rejected the superstition; but there still linger traces of it in the magical power attributed to the ordinance in the minds of some.

Professor Mozley, who once upheld this exaggerated view of Baptism, but who afterwards surrendered it as an untenable doctrine, not in accordance with either the Word of God or the Prayer Book, thus defines what is usually understood to be the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration:—"The 'new nature' is represented as a wonderful and mysterious change which takes place in the soul at a particular time—that, namely, of Baptism; in consequence of which the person becomes after Baptism something very different from what he was before; he has undergone a kind of transformation, and a stroke of Almighty power has altered him from a natural to a spiritual being. But wonderful, sublime, and mysterious as this change is, it does not involve any moral change whatever; I mean that the person over whom it has passed may not be at all better morally than an unregenerate person. The indi-

vidual thus transformed may be the most profligate of men, abandoning himself to every vice, and indulging every vile and gross passion."

Among the many causes, which may have led to such an erroneous doctrine being taught, from the simple initiatory rite of Baptism appointed by our Saviour, at least two deserve special attention. The *first* of these is the deep-seated tendency in human nature, to exaggerate the importance of external ceremonies. It will, I think, be found in the history of all divinely-appointed symbols, that when the spiritual life of the people dies out, the spiritual and higher meaning of all symbols is lost sight of. The rite itself is retained, and, as a rule, far greater importance is attached to the external ceremony than before, till at last that which was once only a symbol, takes the place of the thing symbolised. This has, undoubtedly, been the case in Baptism. The mere outward sign has been confused with the thing signified. The *second* cause deserving of comment, is the misapplication of passages of Scripture. Nothing creates so much confusion, as the free-and-easy way some people have of taking out single texts from God's Word, without the slightest regard to the context, and using them to prop up some preconceived notion of their own. Before using solitary texts taken here and there, we should be most careful to ascertain their bearing on the conditions of the people to whom they were originally applied, and see if the conditions of

those to whom they are about to be applied correspond with each other. Most men of candour and fairness will admit that it is not right to take texts originally referring to the Baptism of *adults*, and apply them to the Baptism of *infants*.

There are, however, some who, though they reject the superstitious view of the magical power of the baptismal water, still attribute an undue efficacy to the ordinance of Baptism. They believe that the merits of Christ are applied to the child in Baptism, and that the sponsors'[1] faith is accepted for his, so that then and there he is justified by Christ's blood. Nothing short, however, of a clear scriptural statement to that effect could possibly justify such a doctrine; but there is not the remotest suggestion of it throughout the Word of God. The doctrine derived its support from the misapplication of such of St. Paul's statements concerning baptized adults as the following: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27). "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 3, 4). These passages were obviously addressed to *adult* converts, who alone can "rise from a life of sin,"

[1] For more on the subject of God-fathers and God-mothers, see the chapter that deals with Confirmation.

and "walk in newness of life." There is no authority whatever, for applying the same language to those who have received Baptism as *infants*.

As infants cannot fulfil the conditions of Baptism in confessing Christ, an ingenious solution of the difficulty has been found. The want of faith in the infant is supposed to be supplied by the faith of the sponsors. But as the institution of sponsors belongs to times subsequent to the apostolic age, this hypothesis naturally falls to the ground. Proctor, in his "History of the Book of Common Prayer," tells us that originally the answer to the question, "Why, then, are infants baptized, when, by reason of their tender age, they cannot perform them [repentance and faith]?" was, "They *do perform them* by their sureties, who promise and vow them both in their names." At the Savoy Conference in the reign of Charles II. this answer was altered into the present form, which simply states, "Because *they promise* them both by their sureties; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform." Promising and performing are two very different things. It is satisfactory to note here that, by this modification, the Church has entirely withdrawn her support from such an unscriptural tenet as the faith of one being accepted vicariously for another, who is incapable of its exercise.

If we wish to apply such texts as those already mentioned, we must be careful that we do so to the

right persons. The adults, who voluntarily came forward to testify their faith in Christ in New Testament times, correspond to those who voluntarily come forward at Confirmation, and of their own free will take upon themselves the vows made for them at Baptism. Bishop Oxenden, Richard Hooker, and Dean Goulburn, all most fully agree that "Confirmation is the complement of Baptism." At Confirmation[1] we charitably presume that the candidate is, what he or she professes to be—viz., a true believer. Candidates are then old enough to understand the Christian faith, and, had they never been baptized, to have the ceremony performed. Our Church nowhere recognises those as in full communion who have merely been baptized. Every parishioner or member must be a communicant, and no one can be a communicant unless he is first confirmed.

Another proof of the absence of any support from Scripture for the Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, is to be found in the frequency with which the advocates of that doctrine refer to our Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus, in which He makes use of the words, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It is argued that, because our Saviour associated the water and the Spirit, that, therefore, the water of Baptism was always accompanied by a quickening influence. Professor Mozley says—

[1] For more on this subject see chapter on Confirmation.

"If persons would attend to the simple construction of this sentence, and to the statement made in it, instead of going off upon one phrase, 'Born of water and the Spirit,' they should see that this text does not assert anything of the kind they think it does; for this text does not say that every one who is born of water is born of the Spirit; but that those who are born of water *and* are born of the Spirit shall enter into the kingdom of God, or have what is necessary for that entrance. This latter statement is a totally different one from the former, and does not in the least, even imply or contain it. It asserts *two* conditions for entering into the kingdom of God; but it does not say that a person who has fulfilled one of these conditions has fulfilled the other."

The apostle was most careful to guard us against resting on mere outward forms, when he said, 1 Pet. iii. 23, "The like figure, whereunto even Baptism doth now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Had the words, "Even Baptism doth now save us," been permitted to stand alone, the inference certainly would have been in favour of those who hold Baptismal Regeneration. Baptism being thus made a saving ordinance, it would take the place of the new birth or conversion. But to avoid mistakes, the apostle goes on to say what he means by saving Baptism. "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh," that is to say, "not the outward

ceremony of washing with water, which in itself does no more than put away the filth of the flesh," but that spiritual Baptism of which the water Baptism is the sign. Not the outward ordinance, but "the answer of a good conscience toward God," or that profession of repentance and faith which he alone can make, who has been regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is not difficult for us to see why the apostle attached so much importance to this change of heart and a consequent answer of a good conscience toward God, whilst cautioning his readers against trusting in the mere outward ceremony of washing with water, or, as he strongly puts it, "The putting away of the filth of the flesh." As is so often the case in controversy, behind this question there lies another and a far deeper one—viz., the prominence of holiness among the attributes of God, which comprehends the relation of religion and morality. If a person is more acceptable to God because he has been baptized, though this rite of Baptism does not necessitate a moral change, we must necessarily conclude that God judges man by a fictitious ecclesiastical standard, instead of by the immutable laws of morality. His judgment must be, not according to good works, but according to rites—Holiness is one thing, Baptism is another. We believe that our God delights in holiness. But Baptism is an accidental thing, dependent upon birth in a country wherein the people profess Christianity. So that

Baptismal Regeneration really asserts an ecclesiastical election to salvation quite independent of holiness, which position undeniably involves a divorce of religion from morality. This, to the majority of thinking men, is worse than any ultra-Calvinistic doctrine. Even the most extreme of the Calvinistic party do not believe in election to salvation; unless it is accompanied by an election to holiness.

A moral change of heart is not merely a thing to be theorised about. It is an everyday practical question, that each of us can witness in the daily life of our companions. If infant Baptism necessarily produces holiness, the schoolmaster would soon observe a distinction between the daily life of the boys in his school who were or were not baptized. The absence of any such evidence is in itself a proof that a moral change does not result from the mere external rite of Baptism. But "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Mere ecclesiastical rites, however great the privileges they confer, will not prove a passport to God's favour. A moral change is absolutely necessary, and that can be brought about only by the power of the Holy Spirit, which is what is understood by true regeneration.

Few people can read the Bible carefully, without seeing that it clearly insists upon the necessity of a change of heart. The Bishop of Winchester says, "It is a most important truth, that, if we would enter into the kingdom, we must undergo a great moral change of heart and nature; and it is most true, that many

have grown up from Baptism, and gone down to the grave, without ever undergoing such a change." Even those who hold the most extreme views admit this in theory, though practically they deny it by asserting that the change has already taken place in them at Baptism. The Bible, however, tells us, and our Church teaches, that Baptism is but the "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." The "inward and spiritual grace" is the new birth, the moral change of heart, the results of which are seen in the daily life of practical holiness. Without this, the "outward and visible sign" is of no avail. Merely stamping the Queen's image on a bad shilling will not make it a good one, though possibly it may become a very good counterfeit. A thoughtful man, though not religious himself, can understand that the truly holy and pure are children of God. He can understand, and his reason acquiesces in the fact, that such are "heirs of God." But very naturally he rebels against the idea that a person, possibly no better than himself, should have become "an heir of God" merely because a certain external rite was performed over him, and that not even at his own desire, but while he was an unconscious babe.

It is not enough to say that there are men of ability, even in these enlightened days, who hold the extreme doctrines I have been contending against. In the heresies of the Church in all ages, it will be found that there were some clever, and even some

good men, who were on the side of error. There was once an eminent man, who was doing much harm by the advocacy of some error, concerning whom a friend remarked to a clergyman, "Well, at all events, you will admit he is a clever man." "Yes," said the clergyman; "when did you ever find the Evil One employing a fool to do his work?" Neither goodness on the one hand, nor brilliant genius on the other, have ever proved a passport to truth. Many excellent men, are not gifted with sufficiently well-balanced brains, to enable them carefully to weigh all the pros and cons, and to distinguish between truth and error. God judges by the heart, and not by the intellect; and well it is for some good men that He does not call upon them to pass theological examinations.

Before going further, I must admit that, from personal experience, I find that the advocates of Baptismal Regeneration are often very much better than their creed, and that many of them do not press their doctrines to their logical conclusion. I believe that some of them are far from trusting to the grace they profess to have received at Baptism, and are, in reality, trusting entirely to the merits of Christ and His precious blood, to cleanse them from all their sins. I fully recognise the fact that many are leading holy and devoted lives; and I would gladly myself follow more closely in their footsteps, in the practical results of their Christian faith. But, having ad-

mitted this much, I must not be understood to believe, that it is a matter of no importance what views a man holds. It is a matter of the greatest importance, that we should hold the truth as revealed to us by God. "The wisdom from above is first *pure*, then peaceable,"—truth comes first. Many good men, who will get to heaven themselves, through the merits of Christ, and whose hearts are right with God, do an incalculable amount of harm to others. Their very goodness is used by the Evil One, to gild the pill of error for the masses to swallow. Many a worldling—having the form of religion—seizes hold of Baptismal Regeneration, as a delightfully easy doctrine; and when spoken to of the necessity of the new birth shields himself behind it, on the authority of some good man. The good man has truly experienced the new birth; Baptismal Regeneration is with him merely an intellectual error. Not so, however, with his worldly followers. Having never experienced the change, they gladly seize hold of the doctrine to account for no change having taken place. The Bishop of Winchester—one of our oldest bishops—says: "In our actual experience, we know that many mere formalists have taken shelter under the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, satisfied to believe that all the necessary change had passed upon them, and that they need look for no more."

However many devoted men there may be, then, among the adherents of this doctrine, I feel convinced that among the masses it will have a most

mischievous effect. The logical consequence of such teaching is, that men trust to their Baptism, rather than to the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion. The profligate soldiers of Spain held up their hands in holy horror at the unbaptized heathen of Mexico and Peru, and gloried in their fancied superiority in being baptized Christians! But their boasted superiority did not deter them from committing the brave defenders of the soil to the flames, nor from violating the Virgins of the Sun—women consecrated to a life of celibacy.

Nor is it only on the mere professors of Christianity, that this doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration has a bad influence. . The tendency of its teaching has a pernicious effect on those who should be labourers in the vineyard; who, however active they may be in other things, frequently overlook the necessity of personal dealing with souls, taking it for granted that all around them are right, because they have been baptized. To quote again the foregoing authority, "The belief in the grace of Baptism, at times, has led to some degree of formalism and neglect of spiritual vitality; whilst those who deny that grace have exhibited a greater zeal for conversion of souls from sin and error, because putting no trust in the supposed existence of a spark of grace derived to all professing Christians in the initiatory sacrament."[1]

The Dean of Peterborough mentions the following case: "A few years ago I recollect seeing a

[1] See Bishop of Winchester on "Thirty-nine Articles."

report sent home by the Jesuit missionaries in China, to the College of the Propaganda in Rome, in which they boasted of the artifices they employed to baptize Chinese infants. Admitted by Chinese parents into their houses—not as priests, but as physicians—they took the opportunity, when they prescribed for the mother or the child, to sprinkle a few drops of water on the child's head, and to repeat the Baptismal formula; and they say it is impossible to calculate how many millions of young Chinese, dying before they commit actual sin, go to heaven every year. And then there follows the horrible conclusion that infants dying unbaptized—even though it be through no fault of their parents, as certainly as it is no fault of their own—cannot enter into heaven." Many centuries ago, when the Isle of Wight was the residence of a heathen king, it is said that two of his sons were sentenced to death for a certain crime. Hearing this, a zealous abbot went over from England and obtained permission to baptize them before execution; so as to save their souls! It is also related that in Mexico and Peru, the Spanish soldiers were generally accompanied by priests, who baptized the poor inhabitants and their children, in order to save their souls before the soldiers massacred them! Prescott mentions one case of a brave native chief, who had been sentenced, by his cruel conquerors, to be burnt alive for defending his native country so nobly. As a great piece of kindness, on the part of his execu-

tioners, they allowed him the privilege of being first baptized. The chieftain, not understanding the advantages of the ceremony, asked what good he would derive therefrom? On being informed that it would be a passport to heaven, he asked if that was the place where his conquerors would go? On being replied to in the affirmative, he answered: "Then I will not be baptized; for I have no wish hereafter to be with men who can be so cruel."

It is not difficult to see how, in the dark ages to which I have been referring, such a doctrine would be easily believed by the ignorant and credulous. Their superstitious minds might be easily persuaded, that certain consecrated water would have a sufficiently magical influence, to be a passport to heaven. To this very day, in spite of all the education that our Government have given to the natives of India, the great bulk of them still believe in the efficacy of the water of the Ganges, to produce most marvellous results; and, consequently, a certain class of impostors, trading on the ignorance and credulity of the masses, carry away bottles full of this water to sell in the different villages, through which they pass on their way home from the pilgrimages. When the bottles are empty, they fill them again with other water, and sell it to the people as water from the sacred Ganges. In dark, superstitious times it was very much to the advantage of the priests, to teach the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration; as it would give them great authority and importance in

the eyes of the laity, who, of course, had not the power to administer the sacred rite. But now-a-days, when the laity read and think for themselves, it does seem as if there were enough unsolved problems, and mental difficulties in life, without adding to their number by teaching, that a few drops of water sprinkled on an unconscious baby are enough to make it a child of God. Never was the caution of good Bishop Usher more needed when he said: "Some have the outward sign and not the inward grace; some have the inward grace and not the outward sign; we must not commit idolatry by *deifying* the outward element."

CHAPTER III.

BAPTISM—PRAYER BOOK TEACHING ON BAPTISM.

HAVING attempted to show, that the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration is not in accordance with common sense, is not taught in the Bible, and has an antinomian tendency, I shall now endeavour to show that it is not taught in our Prayer Book. An old clergyman told me, that he was once discussing this question with one who believed in the doctrine, who said to him, "Well, I admit I cannot prove the doctrine from the Bible; but, nevertheless, I firmly believe it to be true, because our Reformers held it, and I am sure they could not be wrong!" This is certainly one way of arriving at a conclusion. Most people would have reasoned that if the Bible did *not* teach it, and the good old Reformers *did*, the latter must have been labouring under a delusion. Considering the darkness and superstition by which the fathers of the Reformation were surrounded, one would have been quite prepared to expect some traditional taint of superstition, in their otherwise pure teaching. But on examining the

Prayer Book a little more carefully, it becomes evident that it in no way necessarily commits itself to the assertion of a magical change.

There can be very little doubt that up to about fifty years ago the great bulk of the clergy—with a few grand exceptions—held the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, regardless of whether it was the teaching of the Church in the Prayer Book, or not. Gradually, with the spread of education and the greater circulation of knowledge, more scriptural views set in, and the number of those who held exaggerated views on Baptism decreased. This culminated in the Gorham controversy, which took many by surprise, and became quite an era in the history of the Church of our country. Briefly stated, the facts are as follows:—The Bishop of Exeter, who showed more zeal than knowledge, refused to institute a clergyman to a living in his diocese, to which he had been nominated by the Lord Chancellor. The question put by the bishop to the clergyman was, "Does the Church hold, and do you hold, that all infants duly baptized are born again of water and of the Holy Ghost?" Mr. Gorham answered in the negative. He maintained that "Regeneration does not so *necessarily* accompany the act of Baptism," while the bishop maintained that "Regeneration *invariably* takes place in Baptism." The case was referred to law, and finally decided by the Privy Council in favour of the clergyman. On the Privy Council were the

two Archbishops of Canterbury and York, both of whom voted against the Bishop of Exeter. So strong was the ill-feeling that raged over this question, that the Bishop of Exeter accused the Archbishop of Canterbury of being "a favourer and supporter of Mr. Gorham's heresies;" and further informed the clergy of his own diocese, that "he renounced communion with the Archbishop."[1]

As it is always a pleasure, to be able to record something good of a man with whom one differs, I may add that a letter still exists, written by the Bishop of Exeter (Philpotts) to Lord Eldon, the celebrated Lord Chancellor (who was gradually approaching that time when mere earthly greatness could be of no more value), urging him to think about his soul. I regret that I cannot give the actual words; but the drift of it is as follows: "I feel, my lord, that as you are approaching that time when you will have to give an account of your stewardship to God, that it is my duty to urge on you, not to trust to your justly deserved reputation and upright character in the eyes of your fellow-creatures; but to the precious blood and merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Surely after reading this, none can doubt that the bishop himself was trusting to the one Source of all

[1] The words in inverted commas I have taken out of the "Life of Bishop Wilberforce." The editor says in a foot-note, that "on the part of this chapter, which deals with Mr. Gorham, he has had the advantage of the supervision of the Right Hon. Sir R. Phillimore, one of the ecclesiastical judges."

life for his hopes of salvation. It only shows how careful we should be, to distinguish between persons and principles. Many a one whose heart is right with God, will be found holding most dangerous heresies.

It must be remembered that extreme views on the efficacy of baptismal water, vary little from those held by the Brahmins of India. They also attribute a saving efficacy to the water of the Ganges. A very well-informed missionary in India told me, that he believed that originally the Hindoos looked upon the washing in the Ganges, as only a symbol of God's cleansing power. As they became more corrupt, they attributed a cleansing power and efficacy to the sacred water. English sacramentalists may smile at the Brahmin superstition; but substitute the word "font" for "Ganges," and what perceptible difference remains? In the words of Horace—

"Change the name, and the story is told of you."

It is, however, satisfactory to find that, since the days of the Gorham controversy, more intelligent and scriptural views of this sacred ordinance, are rapidly gaining ground.

It would certainly be well for those, who think that our Prayer Book advocates Baptismal efficacy to study that book a little more carefully than is usually done. All corporate institutions are obliged to have certain articles of agreement, which contain the great fundamental principles on which

their society is based. In addition to this, they draw up certain subsidiary laws of their own, based on the principles of their Articles of Agreement. These latter, however, must contain nothing that is contrary to the former. Contradictory statements may creep in, but this is unusual, as the subsidiary laws are submitted to the keen scrutiny of lawyers not personally interested in the matter, whose duty it is to expose anything conflicting with the Articles of Agreement. In the event of any such conflict occurring, appeal must invariably be made to the Articles of Agreement.

This has been the principle on which our Prayer Book has been drawn up. In the year 1562 A.D. the Thirty-nine Articles of Agreement were drawn up in Convocation, "for the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion." It is asserted that they "do contain the true doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God's Word." The Bishop of Winchester says of them: "One fact is plain—viz., that the Articles thus drawn up, subscribed, and authorised, have ever since been signed and assented to by all the clergy of our Church, and by every graduate of both Universities; and have hence an authority far beyond that of any single Convocation or Parliament, viz., the unanimous and solemn assent of all the bishops and clergy of the Church and of the two Universities for well-nigh three hundred years."

The Prayer Book was drawn up as a book of devotion, based on the fundamental principles laid down in the Thirty-nine Articles. A great deal of it consisted of old forms of prayer and devotion, which had been in use for many years, probably many centuries. Everything in use at that time that was not considered objectionable was permitted to remain, and a good deal of new matter was added. But everything, old as well as new, was carefully scrutinised, to see that it accorded with the Articles of Agreement; so that we may fairly presume that the Church is consistent in its teaching. If, however, apparently conflicting statements occur, the Articles, or the legal documents, rule the interpretation of all expressions, in the devotional part of the Prayer Book. The same principles are applied to our Church, as are applied to railway companies and all other great corporate institutions.

In order, then, to ascertain the actual teaching of our Church on the question of Baptism, as so many conflicting opinions exist, one naturally turns to the Thirty-nine Articles to see what is said therein. The whole of Article XXVII. is devoted to this subject. The actual wording is:—

"Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of for-

giveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed: faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

It will be observed that this Article is divided into two parts. The first has reference to the Baptism of *adults* only, while the latter has reference to the Baptism of *infants*. The first part merely states a truth that we hold in common with Baptists, Presbyterians, and others, concerning all adult converts, that "they that receive Baptism *rightly* are grafted into the Church." Therein, the convert is taught that the waters of Baptism have no efficacy of themselves, to make him a Christian; and that he only becomes one by receiving it *rightly;* that is, in compliance with the scriptural conditions, which are faith and repentance. Dr. Boultbee points out that the word "rightly" in Latin is *recte*, which does not mean "rite," evidently showing that, while mere ritual defect need not invalidate Baptism, ritual regularity alone does not insure its efficacy. The Church has always recognised lay, and other irregular Baptisms, to be quite valid.

It must further be remembered that the present Article on Baptism, which was drawn up in 1552 A.D., superseded one drawn up in 1536 A.D., which was considered unsound. The wording of the one

superseded was: "By the Sacrament of Baptism, infants, innocents, and children do also obtain remission of their sins, the grace and favour of God, and be made thereby the very sons and children of God." Were any further proof necessary of the views of the fathers of our Reformed Church, we have the actual words of Archbishop Cranmer, who drew up our present Article. They are as follows: "All that be washed with the water be not washed with the Holy Spirit."

There are, however, certain passages in our Prayer Book which some people do not understand. To them, it almost appears as if the Church taught one thing in the Articles, and another thing in the devotional part of the book. The passages referred to are the four following, which occur in the Baptismal Service and the Catechism:—

"Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church."

Again, "We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it has pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit."

"It is certain, by God's Word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved."

In the Catechism it says, "In my Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

I have already endeavoured to show that even

were it the case, that the devotional part of our Prayer Book contained statements conflicting with the Articles, reference would have to be made to the latter, to decide what the Church really did teach. But I venture to say that there is no conflict whatever between the two parts, and on this all the greatest authorities agree. Those who drew up the Prayer Book, acted throughout on the principle of what is known, as the charitable hypothesis. That is to say, they presumed that people were what they professed to be. The Privy Council, in trying the case of "Gorham versus the Bishop of Exeter," which decided the question of the Church's teaching with reference to Baptism, came to the conclusion, that "The services abound with expressions which must be construed in a charitable and qualified sense, and cannot, with any appearance of reason, be taken as proofs of doctrine."

The Reformers were by no means singular in the adoption of the language of charitable hypothesis. It is the language that we are accustomed to in society, in the present day. It is customary, as we know, to speak of the military members of the House of Commons as the "*gallant* members," to speak of the peers as the "*noble* lords," to speak of our soldiers as "*brave* defenders," to call barristers "*learned* members of the bar," to write of children as "*innocent* creatures," to put the adjectives "fair and beautiful" before ladies. Yet no one for a moment supposes that every soldier is gallant or

brave, or every peer is noble, or every barrister is learned, or every child innocent, or every lady fair and beautiful. Many, as individuals, are the very reverse of what they are called. Society, however, recognises the prominent characteristic of each class, and charitably presumes that each member of the class really possesses the qualification of their number. The Bible acts on the same principle, and speaks of the Jews as a "*holy* people," though we know perfectly well that many as individuals [1] could in no way answer to this description.

It has been said that this is a dishonest principle, and that no one has a right to speak of a soldier as being brave, if all the time they know him to be a coward, and that if a Church pronounces a person to be regenerate, knowing him all the time to be unregenerate, the Church is wrong. But is not this begging the question? The point at issue is that society does not know the soldier to be a coward, nor does the Church know the candidate for Baptism to be unregenerate. If good cause existed to show that the person applying for Baptism was not regenerate, the Church would very properly decline to entertain such an application. But when we know nothing to the contrary, we have every right to presume that a person is what he professes to be. An adult heathen comes forward and makes a profession of Christianity.

[1] For more on this subject, I must refer the reader to Professor Mozley on "Baptismal Regeneration."

He is examined, and if the profession is considered an honest one, he is baptized and pronounced to be "regenerate." The Church charitably presumes that he is what he professes to be. Regarding children, the same principle is applied; only it is on the presumption that the parents are what they profess to be, and that they really dedicate their little one to God in believing prayer, grasping His precious promises. The Church pronounces the child to be what she trusts it will be in reality. Hooker says: "We speak of infants as the law of piety alloweth both to think and speak."

It is possible that we in the nineteenth century, knowing, as we do, all the strife and bitter controversy that has raged over this subject, might like to insert a few words in the rubric, to make matters a little more clear to the unlearned. That may be; but as my object is not to sit in judgment on the wisdom, or absence of wisdom, evinced by our good Reformers, I merely confine myself to saying what I believe they taught. Bishop Oxenden remarks that: "The bishops of the American Church, at their general Convention in 1871, put forth the following authoritative declaration, touching the meaning of the word regeneration in Baptismal service. 'We do declare that in our opinion, the word "Regeneration" is not there so used, as to determine that a moral change in the subject of Baptism is wrought in the Sacrament.'" I think they were wise to put forth something by way of explanation; but it must

not be thought that they thereby changed the meaning of the Reformers' words. Language changes by degrees, and in the course of a few centuries words fail to convey the same meaning that they originally did. The American bishops merely stated what *they* believed, to be the opinions of the Reformers.

It is very interesting to observe the changing current of thought among High Churchmen, and to see that the *opus operatum* theory, which maintains that a few drops of water sprinkled on a helpless infant are able to produce a marvellous and mysterious change in his spiritual condition, is dying out. Though not slain, the snake has been severely scotched. Already, those who are said to hold Baptismal Regeneration are divided into many camps, each one differing from the other. Some say, with Dr. Newman, "Original sin is washed away, and such influences of grace given and promised as make it a child's own fault if he, in the event, fails of receiving an eternal inheritance of blessedness in God's presence." Others modify this view, and maintain that grace is given in Baptism, which lies dormant, and is developed at conversion. On the other hand, a third party believe that persons are saved in Baptism, but almost all fall away and need conversion.

It will be seen that in the two latter of these views, there is a distinct decrease of the purely formal view of Baptism, and a proportionately greater stress laid on its more spiritual aspect. It

is gratifying to see that even where evangelical truth has not altogether prevailed, it has nevertheless exerted a healthy influence.

There is, however, another class to whom I have not referred, who in theory hold the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, but entirely reject the superstitious view of the ordinance, by limiting the force of the word Regeneration. Those who do not hold the "charitable hypothesis" theory for which I have contended, and yet reject the superstitious view of Baptism, must of necessity endorse this view of the teaching of the Church. Indeed, it is very questionable if many of the Reformers themselves did not hold it. The theory is based on the assumption that Regeneration does *not* mean a new birth, a moral change, spiritual renovation, or anything of that kind. They understand it to mean, merely, a new state or condition of great privileges. Consequently as Baptism does admit, as I have already endeavoured to show, the individual to very great privileges, they call it Baptismal Regeneration.

Thus by the expression in the Catechism, "In my Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an *inheritor of the kingdom of heaven*," they simply understand a member of the outward and visible Church on earth. Our Saviour made use of the expression, "kingdom of heaven" in the parable of the Ten Virgins to denote the great body of professing worshippers on earth. The

mention of the five foolish ones shows that the kingdom of heaven is to be taken in a limited sense. The visible Church on earth must ever contain some mere professors, or foolish ones. Even they, by baptism, are admitted to very great privileges, which the heathen can never enjoy, and for which they will have to render an account to their Creator.

This view of Baptismal Regeneration differs very little from that I have advocated in Chapter I., viz., that Baptism brings us into a covenant relationship with God, a view which is not only held by a very large body of the Church of England, but is taught in the Shorter Catechism of the Scotch Church, and universally throughout Scotland. The Irish Church, which is perhaps as distinctively Evangelical as any Church, Episcopal or not, throughout the world, discussed this question fully, and decided to retain the words as they exist in our Prayer Book. I have already shown that the American Episcopal Church holds the same view of the question. I have noticed that the Prayer Book, used by the Reformed Church of England, has changed the words from "wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," to the following: "When I became a member of the visible Church of Christ." The idea is exactly the same, only that the figurative language of our Saviour, suited to Eastern modes of speaking, has been rendered into language more adapted to Western modes of thought, in which figurative expressions are not so common.

The only objection to this view of Baptismal Regeneration that I am aware of, is that given by the Bishop of Liverpool when he says, "The only Regeneration that I can see in Scripture is not a change of *state*, but a change of *heart*." That is the view I assert which the Church Catechism takes, when it speaks of "death unto sin, and the new birth unto righteousness." To speak of Baptismal Regeneration appears to me to be misleading in the extreme. Ninety-nine laymen out of a hundred do not understand these fine distinctions, and naturally attribute to such expressions the magical charm contained in the *opus operatum* theory. There can be no doubt, that whatever views old Fathers and old Reformers may have held hundreds of years ago, with regard to the word regeneration, the great mass of our countrymen in the present day believe it to be a real moral change, which every child of God has to undergo before he can enter heaven.

It is for the clergy, and others who are engaged in teaching the public, to decide whether it is wise to make use of language and phrases that are not understood by the people, to whom they address themselves. If they do not use the words and ideas current among the great bulk of their countrymen, they should not at all events blame the laity, who cannot be expected to be *au courant* with all these fine theological and ecclesiastical distinctions, if they misunderstand them. I have already endeavoured to show that the ordinance of Baptism

entails privileges and advantages greater perhaps than people, who have not seen much of heathenish impurities, imagine. Nevertheless, it falls far short of that new birth without which none shall enter the kingdom of heaven. The Apostle describes that change by the strongest possible language, "Old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new." The term Baptismal Regeneration is an heirloom handed down from superstitious magical days, which many continue to use, though, as a matter of fact, they do not hold a single one of the errors associated with it.

Some people have been perplexed by the expression, "It is certain, from God's Word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." The conclusion they draw from this is, that those children who die unbaptized are not saved. I remember one poor woman in India losing a child which had never been baptized. She received a visit from a chaplain who, most people would have thought, would have availed himself of the opportunity of pouring into her ear words of Christian hope and consolation. Instead of this, the earnest but misguided man, informed the poor woman that he believed her child had gone to hell! He thought it a good opportunity of being faithful to the teaching of his Church! The majority, I take it, would consider that he took a good opportunity of displaying his utter want of tact and judgment. The Church states only one side of the

question, viz., that the baptized are saved. Nowhere, however, can it be found that the Church declares that those who are not baptized are lost. The Bishop of Winchester in a footnote says: "Archbishop Lawrence quotes a passage from the 'Reformatio Legum,' a document drawn up by Cranmer, which most satisfactorily shows that the English Reformers by no means adopted the opinions of the late Fathers and of the Schoolmen—that all unbaptized infants must inevitably perish."

A clergyman once assured me that in his parish, the ignorant poor people had often told him, that they believed that those that died unbaptized "went to na'ar a place, but flitted about in the air." Their superstitious creed seems to me to be preferable to that, which some misguided people want to attribute to our Church. As the New Testament says nothing on the subject, I think all but the most bigoted will admit that the Christian parent of the present day, if his child die unbaptized, is not worse off than the Jewish king of old who, when he lost his little one, comforted himself with the thought, "I shall go to him, but he cannot return to me."

The Bishop of Liverpool says, "We are all travelling to a place where controversies will be forgotten, and nothing but eternal realities remain. Would we have a real hope for that day? We must see to it that we have a real Regeneration." And again, "Are our hearts changed? Alas! it is poor work to

wrangle, and argue, and dispute about Regeneration, if, after all, we know nothing about it within." I have endeavoured to state the necessity for Baptism, and pointed out the abuse of the doctrine; but in conclusion, I feel that I cannot do better than urge each one, to turn from the material water to the life of holiness and purity, of which the water is but the symbol. May we not only be washed in the precious blood of Christ, but may we further be, day by day, cleansed from all impurity of the flesh. In a world of sin and temptation we are surrounded with evil, and are in danger consequently, of contracting much defilement and impurity in our daily contact with the world. May He who uttered those words, "He that is washed (or bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet," attend our footsteps daily, and keep us from sin; for without Him we can do nothing.

"And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone."

Confirmation.

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CHAPTER IV.

CONFIRMATION—ITS SPIRITUAL BENEFITS.

IT is related of the celebrated painter, Apelles, that when asked, why he took so much pains about a certain picture, he replied, "I am painting for eternity." He doubtless meant to say, that when he was dead and gone his picture would still live to bear witness to his skill, and therefore he was bound to take pains with it. Now, if there is one part of the Church's work more important than another, it is that of training the young; for, when its older members have passed away from the conflict here, the Church will still live on, in the persons of what we now call the rising generation.

> "Others soon will take our places,
> Who in their turn will pass away."

When the Spartans were asked by their enemy, to send three hundred children as hostages, they replied: "No! We can spare men; but we must take care of our little ones. They will live on

when the men have died, and will keep up the honour and reputation of our nation when we have passed away." The Church which neglects the young, however much attention it may bestow on its adults, is neglecting its truest interests by acting on a very short-sighted policy. Not only are the young more impressionable and more capable of receiving the truth, but, when gathered in, they are, humanly speaking, more calculated to be useful members of the Church.

Yet, in connection with the rite of Confirmation, which is pre-eminently the Church's method of caring for the young, one now and then hears asked such questions as the following: "What is the object of Confirmation?" "Will the actual laying on of the hands of a bishop do any good?" "Has Confirmation any deep spiritual meaning, or is it a meaningless external ceremony?" It is in the hope that I may be able to answer these questions, that I have written the following pages.

The object of Confirmation is threefold. In the *first* place, it endeavours to bring into personal contact with the minister of Christ every child, as soon as he reaches an age of responsibility, and is capable of deciding between right and wrong, and ere he leaves the impressionable age of youth, and has developed into manhood, with all its accompanying temptations, so that he may be won for Christ. In the *second* place, it enables those who

are true believers, to come forward and make a public profession of their faith. The Prayer Book says of the rite, "which order is very convenient to be observed; to the end, that children, being now come to years of discretion, and having learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in Baptism, they may themselves, *with their own mouth* and consent, openly before the Church ratify and confirm the same; and also promise, that, by the grace of God, they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully, to observe such things as they, by their own confession, have assented unto." In the *third* place, the Church is hereby guarded against the intrusion of unworthy members.

The great object of the apostles seems to have been to lead inquiring souls to a point of decision, and thus induce them publicly to profess their faith, in Baptism. As, however, Infant Baptism is the almost universal practice of Christendom, this rite has quite ceased to be what once it was, and what it still is in India, Burmah, Africa, and other non-Christian countries, where adults are called out of the false systems of worship which prevail. I think very few will maintain, that the mere fact of having been baptized as a child, is in any way a test of reality. Were it not that the Church has appointed a further rite, we should have lost not only the original testing-point; but the majority of professing Christians would have to go through life without being

brought into personal contact with experienced Christians, who could deal with them individually.[1]

I think it is almost impossible to overrate the importance of the rite of Confirmation, as a means of grace. It is the only time in a man's career when the Church appoints that he shall be individually brought into contact with a minister of Christ, who shall personally deal with his soul. At Baptism the child is brought individually; but then it is not capable of understanding. In after-life, people are preached to in hundreds and thousands. At the communion-table they are surrounded by numbers. In many of our large cities and towns, there are thousands of people, who never come into contact with their ministers, from one end of the year to the other; except, perhaps, to be married, or

[1] It is a point well worthy of remark that we are never told about the baptism of children in the New Testament. There were, of course, whole families baptized, and some maintain that the presumption is that there were infants among them; but this is reasoning from inference rather than from facts. We are told of the baptism of adults who thus made a public profession of their faith. There can, however, be no doubt that the Early Church baptized infants, and had a Scripture precedent for thus admitting children to the outward and visible Church on earth. They reasoned that if God was pleased, to permit the initiatory rite to be put on the children under the Mosaic dispensation, where did He forbid it under the Christian dispensation? True, the initiatory rite was changed from Circumcision to Baptism, but nowhere is it forbidden, that children should be received into the outward and visible Church on earth. Neither our Church, nor any other Church of any position, admits members to full communion, until they have made a personal profession of faith.

to present a child for Baptism. Many speak to the minister for the first time alone when they are visited on their dying beds. Alas! for some the opportunity comes too late, too late!

The experience of almost all clergy, evangelists, and Sunday-school teachers, goes to show that conversions after the age of twenty-five are quite the exception. The character then formed is, to a great extent, formed for life. Between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five the child is developing into maturity. Hitherto he has been shielded from temptation, to a great extent, by the purity of home life. But, sooner or later, he has to go forth and contend in the world's great battle-field. Never is there a time when there is greater need of a solid foundation on which to build for eternity, or of the personal presence of the Captain of our salvation. It is just at that impressionable age of life, that the Church urges on the young, the importance of a public profession of taking Christ to be their king, that He may reign in their hearts, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Thus many who are halting between two opinions, are led to decide whom they will serve; and many who have already made this decision are confirmed and strengthened in their faith.

Confirmation, if rightly understood, should be the happiest period of life. Then it is the individual should decide for Christ. I once asked a young lady when she was converted. Her reply was, "Oh,

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laid down that, "Every parishioner (or member) shall communicate at least three times in the year," so that the inference is that none are true members who do not so communicate. It is further enacted that "There shall be none admitted to the Holy Communion until such time as he be confirmed." Only those can be confirmed whom the minister "shall think fit to be presented to the bishop" for this purpose. The Church has thus guarded herself, as far as she can, against the intrusion of unworthy members.

Richard Hooker, in speaking of Confirmation, calls it a "sacramental complement;" and Bishop Oxenden and Dean Goulburn both speak of it as the "complement of Baptism." The former says of it that it is "The conclusion and completion of the act of Baptism. It is the rite of public and full admission to Church membership, and the introduction to the Holy Communion; and is thus the cementing link between the two sacraments." Our Church cannot be said to recognise Baptism as complete; until the rite of Confirmation has been performed. Confirmation is, in fact, to the children of Christian parents what Baptism is to the adult heathen. They are then and there not only called upon to decide for Christ, but to make a public profession of their faith. The Church presumes, that if they have not really taken Christ to be their Saviour before the course of preparation for Confirmation commences, they will do so during that

period; and that when the clergyman who prepares them shall pronounce them to be "fit," that is to say, when to the best of his judgment he shall consider them to be Christians in something more than mere profession, they shall then be presented to the bishop, and make a public profession of their faith, and be received into full communion with the Church.[1]

It is no argument against Confirmation to say that some few ministers are guilty of a hollow,

[1] A very thoughtful, catholic-spirited Baptist missionary in India, once remarked to me, that he thought that Baptists had far more in common with our Church than was usually supposed. He said, "A Baptist has a child born, and immediately asks the minister of his Church, to publicly dedicate that child to God in prayer on the following Sunday. When the child grows up, and is old enough to exercise faith, he is presented publicly for Baptism, and is thus received into full communion in his Church. The Church of England member has a child born, which in due course of time is presented for Baptism. When that child grows up, and is old enough to exercise faith, he confesses that faith publicly at Confirmation, and is received into full communion in his Church." The English Church has *Infant* Baptism and *Adult* Confirmation. The Baptist Church has *Infant* Dedication and *Adult* Baptism. In both cases there is a public dedication to God, and a public confession of faith. He said, "If in your Church you would only allow of an alternative service, dedicating a child to God when born, and baptizing him afterwards, many of us Baptists would join you. You might still retain your ordinary service for those who prefer it." I could not help being reminded of Archbishop Whately's words, "Change *ten* words in the Prayer Book and you will admit many more than *ten thousand* people into the Church." I fear, however, that public opinion is not sufficiently ripe for such a large-hearted, comprehensive measure as that suggested by the good Archbishop. Possibly the growth of infidelity may in the future drive Christian people closer to each other.

perfunctory performance of their duty in the solemn preparation of the young for this rite. In every calling of life will be found some who neglect their duty; and though it is to be feared, that in the past, it was not the few but the great bulk of the clergy, who adhered merely to the bare letter of the instructions, thus evading the spirit; yet it may be hoped that signs are not wanting of a decided change for the better. The majority seem to be awakening to a sense of the responsibility which thus devolves upon them, of personally dealing with souls.

There are, however, some who engage in the responsible duties of preparing the young for Confirmation, who still very much overlook the spiritual importance of the rite. The main qualification in the candidate they present to the bishop as "fit," is, that he has reached the age of fourteen! If the candidate can in addition repeat the Ten Commandments and the Catechism, and profess a nominal belief in the Articles of the Christian Faith, they look for nothing more. All this is contrary to the whole spirit of the teaching of the Church, which considers the rite of Confirmation a preliminary step to participation in the Holy Communion. If the candidate is not considered fit to become a communicant, he certainly is not fit to be confirmed.

In the "History of the Prayer Book," Proctor tells us that before the time of the Reformation

there was no examination previous to Confirmation. The rite was then looked upon as a magical charm which, like a medicine, worked independently of the state of mind and heart of the candidate. All this has been changed, and an appeal is now made to the reason of the candidate, as well as to his affections, when he reaches the age of responsibility, and thus, humanly speaking, becomes a free agent to decide for eternity. It is a point, perhaps, not unworthy of comment that a certain section of the Church, are making efforts to lower the age required as "a competent age" at which a child shall be confirmed.[1]

It is a most difficult thing for any one human being, to speak with confidence of the exact state of the spiritual condition of another. It is a matter in which we must exercise the greatest amount of caution and charity. Our new Archbishop is reported to have said, that our great fault in the Church of England is, that we always take it for granted that people are converted, as our Prayer Book was drawn up for believers. It is possible that some go to the other extreme, and speak of conversion too lightly, and judge of it too easily. In the daily papers I read that a young girl, a member of the Salvation Army, in retailing an account of her so-called persecutions, said that the magistrate and policeman had both

[1] In the Oxford Tract LXXXVI the same party mourns the disuse of the unction which was used in pre-Reformation times.

"very unsaved-looking faces!" To judge of the soul by the face, is an extreme that I should imagine most moderate Christians would shrink from. But surely there is something between this, and the opposite extreme, of taking it for granted that all are children of God.

Difficult as the task may be of estimating the condition of another's spiritual state, it is one that faces us all through life, and one from which the responsible servants of the Church must not shrink. The bishop has to decide on the spiritual qualifications of those who present themselves for the sacred office of the ministry. The minister, in his turn, has to form an estimate of the condition of those who present themselves for Confirmation. Every member of a committee, which has the sending forth of missionaries and readers, must form an opinion as to whether each new candidate for office has the necessary qualifications. Each person called upon to judge, can only form an estimate to the best of his ability, seeking for guidance from above, and judging as he should wish others to judge him. It is a remarkable thing that our Saviour, who said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," immediately qualifies the statement by the words, "for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again."

I am far from wishing to reflect on others, many of whom are dead and gone; but I must say it is with great pain I have to look back upon my own Confirmation. As far as the bishop was con-

cerned, the address was admirable; but as for the clergyman who was supposed to prepare me, I feel thankful to think that his example is not being universally followed, by those who are preparing candidates in the present day. One of a class in a school of some dozen boys, we were examined together, and had to go through the routine of repeating Catechism and Commandments, in much the same way as we had to repeat our lines of Ovid and Horace. By means of "cribs," I believe we all fairly well passed our examination; but I venture to say that the mathematical master took far more pains to make us rightly understand propositions of Euclid, than were taken, to make us rightly understand things that belonged to our eternal peace. I am not an advocate for ever speaking to another about personal religion before a third person; still less when associated with a lot of school-fellows; but I believe now that very few ministers think they have done their duty by a child, in preparing him for Confirmation, without taking an opportunity of seeing him alone in the privacy of their own study, and kneeling with him in prayer.

If there ever is a time, or a season, in the whole life of a man when this question of conversion should be urged on him, that season surely is at the time of his Confirmation. If there is one individual more qualified than another, apart from relatives and friends, who has a right to deal personally with a soul at that time, that person is the minister of the

gospel, who has taken on himself the solemn office of preparing candidates for Confirmation.

If each minister of Christ, lovingly and affectionately, urged on each candidate the importance of decision before he passed away from the impressionable age of life, no doubt many more souls would be gathered into the fold. It is to be feared that in too many instances the age is past, the opportunity is lost, and many pass away who might justly say, "No man cared for my soul." Thus the whole object of the rite of Confirmation is defeated.

It should be impressed on the candidates that they are, by a voluntary act of their own, making a public profession of Christianity; and that, not because their comrades are doing it, or because it is the right thing to do, or because they have attained a certain age, but because they have availed themselves of the merits of their Saviour's atonement. If they are conscious of not being prepared, they should then be permitted to retire, without public attention being called to the fact. It cannot be too strongly impressed on them that it is better to defer their confirmation for a time, than, by hastily and lightly undertaking it, to rush heedlessly in, and thus make a false public profession. Though the minister is bound to form an opinion, to the best of his ability, of the qualifications of the candidate, he should in his turn point out that he is not infallible, and that ultimately the responsibility must rest with the individual. In the invitation to Holy Com-

munion the clergyman says: "My duty is to exhort you in the mean season to consider the dignity of that holy mystery, and the great peril of the unworthy receiving thereof; and so to search and examine your own consciences, and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God." Thus the Church throws the onus on the individual, exhorting each one to examine himself. As in the case of the participation of Holy Communion, so also in the case of Confirmation, which is but the preparatory step, the minister's duty is to point out to the candidate that he must judge himself.

At one time the rite of Confirmation was considered a great safeguard to the Lord's Table. When the nation was about half, or even less, than its present size, there were very nearly as many bishops. The consequence was that bishops used to examine the candidates themselves, and frequently turned them back for further preparation. The results of our present system of over-worked bishops, is that we are not only practically falling into Presbyterianism; but we are without even the healthy checks that system possesses. In Scotland, the Presbyterian minister has the lay elders as a check to his power of admitting to or rejecting from Holy Communion. In an Episcopal Church, the minister has in theory the control of the bishop. But if the bishops are so much over-worked, practically there is little or no check on the parish clergyman. He should therefore realise all the more the terrible responsibility thrown

on him. With increased powers he incurs increased responsibility.

It may of course be asked, What right has the Church to appoint any safeguard? It is a right she possesses in common with all other corporate institutions and with all other Churches. Indeed, one of the strongest proofs of the necessity of the rite of Confirmation is, that all other Churches have something more or less formal, to correspond with it. In Scotland, before any can partake of their "first Communion," they have to be presented with a "token" by their minister. With the Wesleyans and Congregationalists in England, no one can become a full member of the Church, without first being examined and considered fit by the minister, or those appointed to examine. With the Brethren none are admitted to "break bread" without being introduced for the first time by some recognised member of their body, who, it is taken for granted, has examined, or otherwise convinced himself of the fitness of the individual to join them. With the Baptists, before any are immersed, they are examined by some responsible individual. All these, recognise the importance, of guarding themselves against the intrusion of unworthy members, and of personal dealing with the souls of individuals, with the view of getting them to decide for Christ.

A Church cannot be too careful about the class of persons admitted to Communion. If a low moral standard once creeps in, it is a most

difficult thing to get rid of it. We read of St. Paul reproaching the Corinthians, with their lax discipline and their immorality; but we never once read of his blaming a Church for being too strict. It is one thing to invite *all* to come and hear the gospel preached; but another to receive persons who are evil-livers into Communion. As in a school, in a regiment, or in a large firm, so in a church or any other corporate body: once let a few men with a low tone and low moral views in, and the corruption spreads rapidly. The eleven good, out of a dozen apples, will not make the decayed one good; but the presence of that one apple breeding corruption endangers the good fruit. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

The individual who objects to being examined by a minister of the Church of England, prior to Confirmation, will find that no other Church will receive him into their Communion, without first examining him. Possibly the ceremony may not be quite such a formal one, as ancient corporate bodies are generally more formal than modern ones, but still he will have to submit to some form of examination. That body known as the Brethren, who are, perhaps, the least formal in their mode of admission to Communion, put very searching questions to those who desire to join them; and so with other bodies. A very touching story is told of a poor ignorant woman in Scotland, who had applied

for her "token for first Communion." Having been unable to answer satisfactorily those who were examining her, she was told that she could not be received into Communion. She turned to go away, but in doing so, said, "Weel, I dinna ken that I am sufficiently educated to answer all your questions, but this I do ken, I love my Saviour dearly, and I would gladly dee for Him." Her examiners, needless to say, saw that her love was a true one, and welcomed her into full Communion. All they had wanted to ascertain was if her faith was real, and thus to guard themselves, to the best of their ability, against mere professors.

The idea of the Church guarding herself against the intrusion of unworthy members is, doubtless, the one that underlies the appointment of godfathers and godmothers, who, at the baptism of the child, make such promises as they hope the child at Confirmation will fulfil. At Confirmation the child takes upon himself the responsibility borne for him by the godfathers and godmothers. Some have objected to the institution of sponsors, and possibly in the present state of the Church, such an institution might be abolished without doing much injury. The Church, however, is a society; and we do not attach sufficient importance to the fact that, though in a professedly Christian country, it has to act on the defensive as well as on the offensive. It, after all, only avails itself of a system in general use in every club in London. Every new

member introduced has first to get one old member to propose him and another to second the proposal. If political, social, scientific and literary clubs find it necessary to adopt such means, to keep out men who are not up to the standard of their particular body; surely the Church, which is a great religious body, has a right to institute some such check on the intrusion of unworthy members? After all, the godfathers and godmothers merely vouch for the fact that, the parents of the child, or one of them, at all events, is a member of the Church, and desires to have the child trained up as a Christian man's child should be. The officiating clergyman is directed to inform the godfathers and godmothers that it is their duty to rightly instruct the child in those things "which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." The custom has come to be that these persons, presuming that the father and mother are the best-fitted persons to do this, or to cause it to be done, leave it to the parents. The authority of godfathers and godmothers is like that of schoolmasters, only that which is delegated by the real parents. No one maintains that the institution of sponsors is a scriptural one, or is at all essential to the validity of Baptism. It has been and may possibly again become a very useful institution. At all events, it is a harmless ecclesiastical relic of a bygone age, and may still be made a real spiritual relationship. It is generally supposed that the office of godparents originated in

times when Christian parents suffered martyrdom; and that it was to insure their children being brought up in the knowledge of God, and the truths their parents died for, and to prevent them from being taken back to the heathen relatives of the converts who had died. I cannot understand how any true believer can accept the office without feeling obliged to plead at the throne of grace for his godchild's soul. The times we live in may have changed, institutions change daily, but there is One who has never changed, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," and He can and will hear the prayers put up for the little ones.

Although all Churches have a more or less formal examination, before they will admit any to full communion with them; I think few will deny that the rite of Confirmation, when properly understood and acted on, is of great benefit to the Church. In those Churches which do not have the ceremony; it is the individual who takes the initiative, by asking the official representatives of the body he wishes to join, to receive him into communion. But in those Churches in which the rite of Confirmation exists, it is the Church, in the person of her official representatives, the ministers of each parish, that takes the initiative, in pointing out to the young that if they are true believers, it is their duty to make a personal profession of their faith publicly; and that if they are not true believers in

Christ, urging them to become such. The advantage of this must be apparent to every one who has a knowledge of human nature.

In the first place, if no rite of Confirmation existed in our Church, many of the young who attend our places of worship, would grow up and slip through the hands of the ministers, without ever being spoken to about their souls. It is to be feared that many do this now; but the percentage would be much increased, if there was no stated period for such an interview, between the minister and each young member of his congregation. In the second place; there are even among true believers many diffident, retiring sort of people, who, if the first step had to be taken by them, however well qualified they were, would delay the public profession till late in life, or possibly never make it at all. What can be done at any time is often not done at all.

The rite of Confirmation has a distinct missionary effect on the young. It gives the minister an opportunity, as well as a good excuse, to speak to parents about their little ones, and to have the young ones of their congregations committed to their charge for spiritual instruction for a few weeks or months. Moreover, many ministers, amidst all their multifarious duties, would neglect or overlook this important part of their work were it not that the periodical visits of the bishops remind them of their duty, which though it far exceeds

all others, may be forgotten among duties more immediately pressing.

Not only among children, but among adults, I have found, that much misunderstanding exists on the actual laying on of hands by the bishops. Some there are who think that it is a relic of superstition retained by the Church, handed down from a darker and more credulous age. Others think that some magical charm is thereby conveyed through the bishop's hands to the individual, which will give the recipient a power he did not possess before. Dean Goulburn well describes this in the words: "They wish to be better and holier than they are; and imagine that the mere coming to Confirmation will make them so. A blessing (they think) cannot fail to attend the laying on of a bishop's hands." The wish to be better and holier, is very right and proper; but the conclusion arrived at, that the mere laying on of a bishop's hands can make them so, or can even contribute to such a very desirable end, is nothing more than a little bit of superstition; of much the same kind, as that which prompts, I am told, some ignorant ones at Salvation Army meetings to go forward and sit on the "penitent form." They possibly have seen some godless characters truly converted *when* sitting there, and so they jump to the conclusion that if they go and sit there they will derive some benefit! Such are the superstitions, whether inside or outside our Church, we have ever to be on our guard against in dealing with human nature.

One of the holiest and best bishops I have ever met, once remarked to me, "I can pray for a blessing, and I can perform the Church's rite of laying on of hands, but I cannot do more. The Spirit of God alone can change the heart." Those who have set at nought their parents' prayers, have resisted the influence of their Sunday-school teacher, have rejected spiritual assistance from their clergyman, have no right to anticipate a blessing from the "laying on of hands" by the bishop. The mere fact of his being a high dignitary of the Church, does not make his prayers more efficacious. The young candidate does not receive any new influence that was not at work before. He does but add one more, to the many petitions, that have already been put up on his behalf. There is a strange mysterious connection, between the unanswered prayers of God's people when pleading for those who are finally lost, and the responsibility of the individual prayed for. We cannot solve the problem. We can but urge such a one, not to deceive himself in this matter.

The actual imposition of hands by a bishop, however good a man he may be, confers no spiritual benefit or gift. If death reigned before, life will not follow afterwards. The laying on of hands, like the coronation of a king, is but the ceremony appointed for publicly receiving a person into the position he should hold. If a deception has been practised at a coronation, and the wrong person is in the chair, the actual ceremony will not make a change. The

ceremony of Confirmation may be rightly performed; but if the heart of the individual is not right with God, no spiritual blessings will follow. The Church on earth will but have added to that number, whom the apostle describes in his day as having "crept in unawares." The invisible Church, the great body of believers throughout the world at large, will have received no accession to their numbers. There may be joy on earth, but there will be no joy in heaven over one soul, added to the number of God's people.

The laying on of hands, like the shaking of hands, appears to be a very old custom. It is supposed to signify the resting of the blessings, derived from prayer, on the person on whose head the hands are laid. The individual invokes a blessing with uplifted hands to God in prayer, and then brings his hands down and lays them on the head of the person for whom he prays. We read of the aged patriarch Jacob that, "Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head . . . and he blessed them that day." This deep-seated and ancient custom, was honoured by God, when made the outward symbol through which such marvellous and wonderful gifts were conveyed as the gifts of healing and gifts of tongues. We read (Acts viii. 12–17), "When Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money;" and again (Acts xix. 6), "When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the

Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

The "laying on of hands" by the bishop, is the appointed way of blessing the children, and calling down God's blessing upon them. The efficacy of the blessing is not effected by the imposition of hands. That act is but the external ceremony, or the outward symbol of prayer. The bishop's prayers, and the prayers of the Church, or the body of believers of which he is the official representative, are efficacious or not, according to whether or not they are offered in faith. The promise is "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive." Jacob was a very unworthy saint, and one whose character is perhaps the least commendable of all the saints of old; but still he was a believer, and his blessing was a means of calling down God's blessing on his grandsons. We need have no hesitation in believing, that God's people by grasping His promises can call down untold blessings from on high on their fellow-creatures. It is a privilege as well as a terrible responsibility that we enjoy.

The blessing may not come in the way the child perhaps expects; but still none the less will it come in the divinely-appointed way, and in God's time. Children, like older ones who go to the Lord's Supper, sometimes make the mistake of expecting some sort of an electric thrill, or a marked strengthening of their faith, and are disappointed because they

do not receive what they anticipate. It is as true of Confirmation as it is of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, that the efficacy of these ordinances is not tied to the exact moment of time. Because the candidate for Confirmation is not conscious of a blessing, it is no proof that God has not blessed him; or that He is turning a deaf ear to the prayers of God's people in general, and their official representative, the bishop, in particular.

The individual confirmed, may have been a true child of God long before Confirmation, or "even from the mother's womb," as in the case of Timothy; but the Church does not recognise him as a true member until the bishop lays his hands on his head. The adult convert from Hindooism may be a true believer before he is baptized; the candidate for Confirmation may be a true believer before the rite has been performed; but when the ceremony in both cases has been performed, the Church proclaims that spiritual life to the world. The life may have been there; indeed, if it is not there immediately before, it is not likely to be there immediately afterwards; but to the outer world it is then for the first time publicly announced and made apparent. The coronation of the Emperor of Russia did not make him Emperor of all the Russias, for that he inherited by right of birth, but it proclaimed the fact to the world. During the long interval that elapsed before his coronation he was still Emperor. The believer is a true member of the Church of Christ; but at

Confirmation the bishop, who acts as the servant of the Church, makes that candidate a member also of the outward and visible Church on earth.

It has been customary for the girls who are presented for Confirmation to wear white dresses during the ceremony.[1] Some there are who have objected to the custom. Without for one moment wishing to underrate the danger of all symbolical religious teaching, it must be admitted that some symbols have never been abused. Such, for instance, as the spotless white garment worn by the bride at weddings, which indicates her virgin purity; and the smooth round wedding-ring, symbolical of a love that should never cease. It would be difficult to point to any erroneous teaching that has been or is likely to be begotten, by the custom of wearing white dresses at Confirmation. Forewarned is, however, to be forearmed in this case. It cannot be too plainly taught that the white dress is not symbolical of any intrinsic merit possessed by the candidate; but a token of the fact that the Church receives the individual into its outward organization, as one washed in the precious blood of Christ, and thus cleansed from the defilement of sin. "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as

[1] I need hardly add that parents and others who have anything to do with candidates for confirmation, should check the slightest symptoms of that female love of attire, which so often exhibits itself even in the white Confirmation dress. Such a display would be only calculated to draw attention away from the spiritual lessons to be learned.

snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

However much divergence of opinion may exist on the wearing of a white dress, all true Christians agree that the life of the believer should be one of purity and holiness. "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He (Christ) is pure." At Confirmation, the young believer publicly professes, that he has enlisted as a soldier in the service of the Captain of his salvation. The uniform of that service is holiness and purity of life. "By their fruits ye shall know them." He publicly renounces the service of "the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh." To the Church, the great body of believers throughout the world, and to that particular branch of the Church into which he is about to be received into full Communion, he says, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

Dean Goulburn says that the word "renounce" was substituted in our Prayer Book for the word "forsake" in 1604 A.D., and I think most people will agree that it far better expresses the idea intended to be conveyed. We cannot *forsake* the devil or our fleshly nature; but we can renounce or declare our hostility to them. The word *renounce* in "Chambers's Dictionary" is said to mean "to disclaim," "to disown," "to reject publicly and finally." The young believer has henceforth decided

to be a soldier of Christ, to join the great army which no man can number, to become, as the same writer puts it, "members of Christ, or members of that mystical body of which Christ is the Head; and to which He communicates grace and strength, as the head communicates vigour to the body, as the vine sends forth life and strength into its several branches." With the deepest sense of his own sinfulness and weakness, he enlists under the banner of truth, nobleness, and purity. He knows what is right, and which side shall finally prevail; but he also knows his own inability to overcome. The greater his own sense of weakness, the more will he realise the need of strength from above. It is no idle boast on his part that he renounces sin. It merely expresses the feeling that every right-minded person should have. But in joining this army of true believers—the Church on earth—he may have this confidence, that the Great Head has been through the conflict with sin Himself, and has been "tempted in all points like as we are," and is therefore the better able to succour them that are tempted in their hour of need.

I heard a clergyman once relate a legend of a city buried in the depths of a lake. When the waters were smooth, no trace or vestige existed to denote that a city lay hidden beneath them. When, however, the surface became greatly disturbed by storms, the natives of the neighbourhood declared that they could hear faint but muffled sounds

of church bells, as the agitated waters moved the tongues of the bells below. He took the sound of the church bells, to be the summons on earth to man amid all the duties, pleasures, cares, and anxieties of life, to remember his God and Creator in prayer; or, as one writer puts it—

> "Sweet Sabbath bells! their joyous welcome ringing,
> To earth's one haunt of peace, the house of prayer."

We have here a beautiful illustration of human life. How often in youth the seeds of divine truth have been sown by some loving parent, or some minister or Sunday-school teacher, and the young heart embraces Christ as a Saviour. But as years roll by, too often, alas! the individual succumbs to the temptations of life, and for a time all knowledge is hidden, buried in the depths of the heart. Outwardly there exists no trace or vestige of these apparently forgotten truths. As long as prosperity lasts, and life is smooth and pleasant, so long is God forgotten. But a time comes when trials and troubles set in, and the fascinating power of this world loses its charm. It may at first be but the faint and muffled sounds of conscience once more asserting her right to speak of God; but undoubtedly troubles from without do call forth a response from within. Often in despair we think all trace of divine things has been erased from the worldling's heart. But though hidden and buried beneath the depths of sin and worldliness, invisible

to the casual observer, we may take courage at the thought that if the conversion in early life was real, all traces of it can never be completely removed.

Looking around at all the temptations that surround the young in life, many loving parents have trembled at the thought of what their beloved one may have to pass through, and many a true child of God has shrunk from the thought of conflict, wondering whether or no he possesses power to overcome, and be more than conqueror. It must, however, be borne in mind that there is no necessity for falling. True, the tempests may rage, the waves of temptation may threaten to overwhelm the frail barque, and like the disciples of old, the tempted ones may cry out, "Lord, save us, we perish!" But He who of old spake the words, "Peace, be still," and thus quieted the raging sea, is still with His Church, and with each individual member of it; and is watching over each, however sorely pressed with temptation he may be. He knows just when and how to release him, and will "not suffer any to be tempted above that he is able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way to escape."

I believe it cannot be too earnestly impressed on the candidate for Confirmation, that though all the honour and glory is due to God for His sovereign grace, in having drawn his affections upwards; yet, humanly speaking, he alone is responsible for

making every effort to cultivate the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and for mortifying and subduing the works of the flesh. Between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five a character is being formed for eternity, the direct and indirect influences of which are incalculable. Character not only affects the individual, but has an untold influence for good or for evil on hundreds of people, who in their turn affect others. Impressions, whether for good or for evil, once formed, may possibly never be completely erased. I remember once hearing a gentleman publicly say, that when a boy at school fifty years ago, a comrade lent him an impure book for fifteen minutes. At the end of that time he had to return the book, and he never saw it again. During that brief quarter of an hour he received impressions that haunted him throughout his life. The Bishop of Truro[1] said in an address: "Sin finds us out. Those who have sinned greatly in earlier life have many dark hours afterwards—long after they know that God has forgiven them. There is many a man who would give his hand to be cut off at that Holy Table—though he kneels there knowing that he is forgiven—if he could banish the thought of evil, the memories of past years, the awful harvest of the early sowing. Such power the devil has gained, and been allowed to keep over him." The memory of fallen man seems to be like an impure fountain, ever bubbling up, taint-

[1] Late Vicar of St. Peter's, Eaton Square.

ing the surrounding neighbourhood. Many an earnest devoted Christian has had, in after life, to mourn over vile impressions received in his youth. No doubt, with earnest prayer and watchfulness, the evil can to a certain extent be kept under. If the foul monster cannot be slain, it can, at all events, be kept from showing its hideous deformity; but oh, the terrible discipline, struggles, and conflicts that have to be gone through, which, humanly speaking, might have been spared, if only the importance of watchfulness against harbouring evil thoughts, had been more earnestly impressed on the youthful mind!

Mere resistance of evil, however, is a negative thing, and should never stand alone. Side by side with the resistance of evil should be urged the cultivation of good. To be ever weeding a garden without cultivating fruits and flowers is, to say the least, a most unsatisfactory proceeding. As fallen man is capable of sinking to great depths of sin, and becoming more degraded than the brute beasts around him; so man, renewed by the Holy Spirit, is capable of great powers of development in an opposite direction. It is just within the limits of from fifteen to twenty-five years of age that, humanly speaking, man has it most in his own power to cultivate his nature. Habits of thought, and powers of acting formed then, make or mar his life. True, some after that age are truly converted, but they probably will never be able to attain the

character which they might have attained had they, earlier in life, been enabled to devote their youthful energies and efforts to acquiring.

The apostle's directions are, "Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are of good report, *think on these things.*" What would not many give, to have back the glorious opportunities they forfeited in the spring-tide of youth! Power to do good, quite apart from the mere wish to do good, and without ignoring the natural gifts and advantages some have over others, is very much a thing of cultivation. Those who are ever cultivating this gift, acquire a power which those can never attain to, who do not persistently make great effort. God has implanted in us certain gifts; but with us rests the responsibility of the right use or abuse of them.

Some men who, like M'Cheyne, die young, do more good in a few years, than others who live to over threescore years and ten.

"That life is long which answers life's great aim;
The time that bears no fruit deserves no name.
The man of wisdom is the man of years.
We live in *deeds*, not days; in *thoughts*, not breaths;
In *feelings*, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs: he most lives
Who thinks most, acts the noblest, does the best."

Cardinal Wolsey, in his old age forsaken of men, cast aside like a worn-out garment, is reported to have said, "If I had but served my God as

I have served my king, He would not have suffered my grey hairs to go down with sorrow to the grave." How many like him are giving up the energies of youth, the health and strength of the brightest years of life to the service of the world, and the attainment of objects which, of whatever apparent importance, have only a temporary interest. Apart from the danger they are in of losing their souls in the attempt to gain but a very small portion of the world, if they are in later life brought in sorrow to the foot of the cross, and washed in the blood of Christ, what a terrible loss to them as individuals, and to the Church of Christ on earth, will be the energies they have wasted and frittered away!

Some few God does permit, as monuments of grace, to turn to Him in their declining years; but these are very few. It has been often remarked, that in the whole of the Bible there is only one case mentioned of a man turning to God just before death. The thief on the cross is sufficient proof that none need ever despair of mercy; but only one such case is mentioned, lest some should presume, and put off accepting God's offer of mercy to a more convenient season. When such a change does take place late in life, how sad the thought must be of the many years wasted in sin which might have been spent in God's service! The following lines beautifully express what I mean:—

"And now a keen remorseful thought
Oft brings the bitter tears,
That to the cross of Christ he brought
Only his later years.

O brother, wilt thou not seek rest
Ere beaten in the strife;
Or wilt thou bring to His fond breast
Only a worn-out life?"

In concluding this subject, I can only express my earnest desire that every candidate for Confirmation, as well as each person who has undertaken the responsible duties of preparing candidates for that ordinance, who may read what I say, and is about to be received into full communion in the Church below, may become one of that vast number which no man can number in the Church above. May each one who receives the blessing of the Church on earth, in the person of its official representative, the bishop, hereafter be welcomed into one of the many mansions above, by Christ Himself, with those beautiful words: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

CHAPTER V.

CONFIRMATION—ITS ORIGIN AND HISTORY.

It might have been more correct, perhaps, to have considered the origin of the rite of Confirmation at the outset, but I have thought it better to defer it to the end, as many who may agree with all that has been said as to the spiritual benefits of the ceremony, may differ very considerably as to the origin of the ordinance. This is not a question of vital importance. Indeed, there seems to have been a considerable difference of opinion among the Reformers themselves on the subject. As in olden days, so are there now some who value the ordinance very highly; but who consider that it has absolutely no authority from the Word of God; while others believe that it is almost equal to the other two Sacraments, and though not appointed by Christ, has all the authority of an apostolical institution. In this, as in many other things, the probabilities are that the truth lies somewhere between the two. At all events, most will allow that it arose out of the old apostolic laying on

of hands, of which we read in the New Testament. Bishop Titcomb says of it—"It takes its rise from an old practice of a somewhat similar kind which we find in the Acts of the Apostles. It appears to have been a custom of the apostles, after certain intervals of time, to revisit the infant churches which they had planted, for the purpose of looking after their converts, of cheering and encouraging them, and establishing them in the faith of Christ. On such occasions they laid their hands upon them."

In two passages (Acts xiv. 22, xv. 41), which are sometimes referred to, it is not at all clear that any ceremony was performed. They both rather express the idea of one going about, as our political leaders do, throughout certain districts, to encourage their adherents to be loyal to the cause they have espoused, and to confirm the wavering, but without performing any ceremony. The words are, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God." The other passage says, "He went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches."

There are, however, three passages, Acts viii. 17, xix. 6, and Heb. vi. 2, which speak of a "laying on of hands," out of which ceremony doubtless our rite of Confirmation originated. In Heb. vi. 2 the "laying on of hands" is spoken of as among the "first principles" (Revised Version) of Christianity,

and immediately follows after the words "the doctrine of baptisms." It evidently refers to the apostolic laying on of hands which followed after Baptism, as in Acts viii. 14, "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost (for as yet He was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then *laid they their hands* on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." In Acts xix. 5, it says, "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when *Paul had laid his hands upon them*, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

When God commissioned Moses to go and lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, He at the same time imparted to him miraculous power, as a sign to him, as well as to others, of the Divine commission and authority. In the same way, when about to introduce a new dispensation, He sent forth men to preach the Gospel, giving them miraculous power as a proof to themselves, and to others, of their Divine commission. Our Saviour said (Mark xvi. 17), "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents: and if they drink any deadly thing it

shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

In the case of Moses, there can be no doubt that when the necessity for miracles ceased, the power to perform them passed away. Neither can there be any reasonable doubt that in the case of the apostles, when the Church spread and had obtained as it were a footing among men, the miraculous gifts of tongues and of healing passed away. The apostles died, and there is no passage showing that the miraculous powers they possessed passed on to their successors. Henceforth a holy consistent life, the result of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, was to be the means of winning souls for Christ. But though the miraculous power that accompanied the "laying on of hands" by the apostles, was not passed on to their successors, the ceremony itself appears to have been retained. The Bishop of Winchester tells us that Tertullian and Cyril of Jerusalem, both speak of the converts as first receiving baptism, and then *immediately* on their coming out of the water being confirmed by the imposition of hands. This appears to have been quite in accordance with the apostolic mode of procedure, as recorded in Acts viii. 17 and Acts xix. 6, with the exception of the absence of the miraculous power. As the Apostle John lived on to the end of the first century, and Tertullian lived as early as the end of the second century and beginning of the third, there could not have been more than one, or at the outside

two, intervening lives between that of the apostles and of Tertullian, so that the mind of the apostles must have been pretty well known to the Church at that time. It is quite possible that the apostles intended the ceremony to be retained. True, all miraculous power had departed with the apostles, but their successors had the power of prayer. That power is the very life of the whole ceremony. Without it the mere laying on of hands is a meaningless ceremony. With it, the imposition of hands, as the outward symbol of prayer, is a very suitable accompaniment.

But as in the case of the two Sacraments, the spiritual part of the ordinance was omitted as the Church became more corrupt. The external ordinance alone was retained; and as true prayer ceased to accompany it, and no spiritual power was evident, it was necessary to attribute a kind of magical power to the imposition of hands. Nor was this all. As time went on, according to Bingham, the imposition of hands itself was omitted, and an anointing with chrism seems to have taken its place. This chrism was a kind of sacred oil consecrated by a bishop, which was used as a medium for the reception of the Holy Spirit. The idea seems to have been that, as the waters of Baptism washed away sin, so the chrism, with its equally marvellous efficacy, was expected to give the Holy Spirit. This chrism was made by each bishop on Holy Thursday in each year, and sometimes bishops

commissioned presbyters in country districts to perform the ceremony of Confirmation. The fourth Council of Carthage required the presbyters, to apply to their bishops before Easter every year for a fresh supply, which was to be kept under lock and key, prohibiting them to use *old* oil under pain of being deposed from office.[1] At the time of the Reformation many of the Reformers, in disgust at the superstitions that had accumulated around the rite, and not seeing in the Bible any distinct directions as in the case of the two Sacraments, abolished the institution altogether.

The Reformers of our Church, however, appear to have acted on a wiser and more moderate principle. Seeing the benefit that might accrue to the Church by retaining the rite, even though it might possibly not have the authority of the Word of God, they retained the institution, and set themselves to extricate it from the superstitious entanglements into which it had fallen. The present Confirmation Service was drawn up in 1662 A.D., and the observant reader will perceive the very cautious language used on the subject, in that as well as in the Articles and Canons of the Church. In the 25th Article they state most emphatically, that whatever authority the institution might or might not possess, it certainly could not claim the autho-

[1] The Rev. E. B. Elliot gives some very interesting information on the subject in his "Confirmation Lectures."

rity of Christ. The words are as follows:—"Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Sacraments with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God."

When, however, they came to consider the question, as to whether or not the institution had the authority of the apostles, it will be observed that their language was by no means so decided. At the same time while they use language which indicates the existence of a doubt, it must be admitted, that they leant in the direction of stating their belief that the ceremony had apostolic precedent. That a doubt did exist in their minds, is made all the more apparent when we compare the language used on the subject of Confirmation, with that which they made use of on the subject of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Not to trouble the reader with too many quotations, perhaps one will suffice. In Article XIX. one of the essential conditions of a Church laid down is, that "the Sacraments be duly administered." That is to say, they did not recognise a body of men as a church unless "the Sacraments be duly administered." Nowhere, however, do they use such language concerning the

rite of Confirmation. While accepting it for themselves as in accordance with the Word of God, they most carefully refrain from making it a *sine quâ non*, as they did in the case of the Sacraments. Where a reasonable doubt existed they expressed their own opinion, leaving others at liberty to judge for themselves.

There are two expressions sufficiently strong, to show in which direction the Reformers leant. The one is an expression in the prayer, put into the mouth of the bishop after the ceremony has been performed. The words are as follows: "We make our humble supplications unto Thee for these, thy servants, upon whom (after the example of the holy apostles) we have now laid our hands." The other is an expression used in the sixtieth Canon of our Church, which I will quote entire.

"Forasmuch as it hath been a solemn, ancient, and laudable custom in the Church of God, continued from the apostles' times, that all bishops should lay their hands upon children baptized and instructed in the catechism of Christian religion, praying over them, and blessing them, which we commonly call Confirmation, and that this holy action hath been accustomed in the Church in former ages to be performed in the bishop's visitation every third year; we will and appoint, that every bishop or his suffragan, in his accustomed visitation, do in his own person carefully observe the said custom."

Were it not for the words, "after the example of

Thy holy apostles," and "continued from the apostles' time," there is nothing in the Prayer Book to indicate, that the Reformers claimed anything more than that the rite of Confirmation was an ancient custom, and one deserving of being retained. These two expressions, after all, only refer to the external ceremony of "laying on of hands" used by the apostles, and which we have closely imitated. They cannot possibly refer to the benefits derived from that ordinance, which were very different, being absolutely nothing short of miraculous in the case of the apostles. It has been pointed out that the language of our Prayer Book has been used advisedly when it says, "*The Church hath thought good to order* that none hereafter shall be confirmed but such as can say the Lord's Prayer," &c. Now had the rite been one of Divine appointment, it is needless to point out that the Church could not have assumed any power to lay down what the qualifications should be. This in itself shows very much the views of the Reformers. All they contended for was the retention of the old apostolic method of "laying on of hands."

Every Church has a perfect right to appoint its own ceremonies and institutions, provided they have nothing in them contrary to the Word of God. Many things were left to the Churches of different countries, to develop according to their peculiar needs. Unlike the Jewish Church of old, the Christian Church has not been fettered in mere

matters of detail. Sunday-schools and children's services have no special authority from the Word of God; but during the last century they have crept in, and are becoming quite recognised institutions. Even if we cannot prove that Confirmation is actually appointed in the New Testament, we at all events have little difficulty in showing that it is not opposed to it in any way.

Nor was our Church the only one of the Reformed Churches that retained the ceremony. The German Protestants, the Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish Churches all followed her example. The rite has somehow found more favour in those Churches which have retained an Episcopal form of government than in other Churches. Why this should be so it is impossible to say, as Episcopacy is by no means essential to the existence of the rite. In Germany the Lutherans, who are not Episcopalians, attach quite as much, if not more, importance to the ceremony than we do in England.

Some seem to think that they raise the estimation of the rite of Confirmation in the eyes of their fellow-creatures, by claiming for it great authority. It must be remembered, however, that on the other hand we run a great risk of weakening a very good cause, by claiming for it more than we can prove. There are, and always will be some things that we must be content to leave open questions. The rite of Confirmation may or may not have scriptural authority. There can be no doubt that it was a

very ancient practice, and if not actually instituted by the apostles, it was instituted by their immediate successors before the Church became corrupted, in imitation of the practice of the apostles. It is quite true that we have not the miraculous results which followed the apostolic "laying on of hands," but still we have the power of prayer, of which that ceremony was, after all, but an external symbol.

Confirmation is only a sanctification of responsibility, a spiritual coming of age. The Christian Church did not institute marriage, but it recognises it and sanctifies it. There must be a coming of age, or an assumption of responsibility among human beings, whether in secular or in spiritual things. I believe a ceremony of some sort exists among Jews and Mahommedans, when the grown lad assumes the responsibility of choosing for himself and embracing the religion of his parents. Human instincts all over the world, more or less, formally, must recognise this. These instincts being of Divine origin, their outcome may fairly claim a Divine sanction. The Church does not create the instinct. It merely recognises it, and sanctifies it by an appointed ceremony.

Holy Communion.

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PART I.

CHAPTER VI.

HOLY COMMUNION—ITS ORIGIN.

WHEN our Lord was on earth He appointed two Sacraments for His Church. The *first* one was the Sacrament of Baptism, or the initiatory rite which was to be used, when receiving an individual into the corporate institution which He founded. That rite once performed was never repeated. The *second* Sacrament appointed by the Great Founder of the Church was that of the Lord's Supper, which every true believer is commanded to partake of. As the first Sacrament was the rite of initiation, so this second one is the rite of the fellowship that each member should have with each other, and of communion with God. The first was to be performed once and only once, the second was to be repeated from time to time.

Our Lord merely acted in accordance with human customs in thus appointing the two Sacraments. History relates many instances of the formation of

corporate institutions,[1] united for some special object. Some form of initiation was usually performed on each individual when joining for the first time, and some token of fellowship was appointed, to be repeated from time to time, with a view of bringing together the various units; making them realise their corporate union, and stimulating their zeal and energy in the common cause for which they were united.

Very frequently the token of fellowship was associated in some way with a meal, a custom doubtless that sprang from the old Eastern idea of the partaking of salt together, in order to the cementing of friendship. Mr. Edwin Hatch, one of the Bampton Lecturers at Oxford (1880), says, concerning the early Christian Church — "To the Gentile world around them the Christian bodies represented one guild the more; side by side with the innumerable other guilds, the trade and dramatic associations, the athletic clubs, burial clubs, dining clubs, the friendly, literary, and financial societies, to which the Roman or Romanized Greek was already well accustomed. Nor did the outsider distinguish any difference between the organisation of the Christian club and that of non-

[1] The intelligent reader will be able to recall such institutions as the Carbonari, a political society formed in Italy with a view of bringing about the freedom of that country; and the Eleusinian mysteries which were celebrated by a society in Athens, whose object was to impart a knowledge of a future state of existence, and, as Mr. Warburton supposes, also a knowledge of the unity of the Godhead.

Christian bodies. Both were governed by a council, *both had common meals*, common funds, and common religious ceremonies."

Fifteen hundred years before the time in which our Lord appointed this commemorative feast, a similar one had been appointed, called the Feast of the Passover, to commemorate that ever-memorable event when, prior to the children of Israel marching out of Egypt, one son in each family was slain, the Angel of Death passing over the houses where the blood of the Lamb was sprinkled on the door-posts.

At the feast of the Passover, as we know, a lamb was always slain and eaten by the different families gathered together. God also appointed that the lamb should be eaten with "unleavened bread;" thus commemorating the fact that they had not even time to complete baking their bread. In addition to the Lamb and the unleavened bread, it was an old custom of the Jews to pour out four cups of wine, over each of which thanks were offered up. Thus at the Passover three distinct things were partaken of, viz., the lamb, the bread, and the wine. Scripture does not relate how or why the wine was introduced into the feast. The lamb and the bread were divinely appointed; but the wine appears to have been a natural but an accidental addition to the feast. Our Saviour adopted the bread and the wine as symbols of His body and blood. As He was the Lamb of God, the great antitype of the Passover lamb, there was no longer

any need for the slain lamb to be eaten. That was dropped out of the new feast; the bread and wine were alone retained.[1]

To rightly understand the nature of the Lord's Supper, it is necessary to study the history of the Holy Communion since it was first originated in that upper chamber at Jerusalem. There our Lord appointed it to take the place of the Jewish Passover. I have already endeavoured to show that the rite of Baptism was substituted for that of circumcision. In the same way the ordinance of the Lord's Supper took the place of the Passover. As that memorial feast reminded the Jews of their departure out of the land of bondage; so this one reminds God's people that they have passed from a worse bondage than that of Pharaoh, even that of the Evil One. As that Passover stimulated the faith of the Jewish people, and gave them the assurance that what God had done for them was but a foretaste of what He yet would do; so the Lord's Supper strengthens the faith of God's people in this dispensation, and leads them to look forward

[1] The rite of the New Covenant had peculiar reference to the rite of the Old Covenant. "With the Passover, by Divine ordinance, there had been always eaten unleavened bread, and, by immemorial custom, there had been four cups of wine poured out, over each of which thanks were offered up, and of which the third cup was specially called cup of blessing. Now the bread and wine thus eaten and drunk solemnly at the Passover, our Lord adopts as the signs or elements for the institution of His new Sacrament."—*Bishop of Winchester on Thirty-Nine Articles.*

to the time when the struggle shall cease, and they shall be "safe in the arms of Jesus." As the Passover, in reminding them of the past, stirred up feelings of gratitude in the breast of the pious Jew for all that had been done for him as an individual, and for his nation at large; so the Lord's Supper calls forth the gratitude of God's people when they remember what once they were. Nor will they only feel gratitude on their own behalf; but their hearts must well up and overflow with gratitude to God when they reflect, that the outward and visible Church on earth, with its thousands and tens of thousands which are still gaining new victories among the heathen, arose from that little gathering of twelve men sitting around the Lord's table in an upper chamber.

PART I.

CHAPTER VII.

HOLY COMMUNION—NATURE OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

THAT simple feast, apparently so like the meals of other institutions, had, however, a distinguishing feature, perhaps not apparent to the outward eye of sense, but visible to the eye of faith—the presence of the Divine Founder of the Church.

"'Tis a pilgrim, strange and kingly,
Never such was seen before."

The late Dr. Cumming of the Scotch Church, well known as a great writer on prophecy, was once asked by a lady if he believed in the Real Presence. He replied that not only did he believe it; but that it had been the greatest source of comfort to him throughout a lifetime that had not been wanting in its share of trials. The lady expressed surprise, and remarked that she had been under the impression that such a doctrine was only held by Roman Catholics, the Greek Church, and a very

extreme section of the English Church." "Well," said Dr. Cumming, "those who do not believe in the Real Presence of Christ must be losing a great privilege. Perhaps, however, you may have confused the real spiritual presence, which all well-taught Protestants believe in, with the caricature of that doctrine, a carnal presence, which became a tenet of the Church of Rome in its more degenerate days."[1]

The Church of England has adopted the view, known as the Spiritual Subjective Presence, which is the presence of Christ in the heart of the believing communicants. The Bishop of Winchester thus defines it—"Christ is really received by faithful communicants in the Lord's Supper; but that there is no gross or carnal but only a spiritual and heavenly presence there; not the less real, however, for being spiritual. It teaches, therefore, that the bread and wine are received naturally; but the Body and Blood of Christ are received spiritually. . . . Christ does as really nourish and sanctify the soul, as the elements the body." The same authority tells us that this was the view advocated by Calvin, Cranmer, and Hooker. It was also advocated by the late Bishop Wilberforce, though often more extreme doctrines are attributed to him. His own words are as follows:—

"I understand our Church to teach positively,

[1] For more on this subject I must refer the reader to the chapter on Transubstantiation.

as she has received from God's Word and Primitive Antiquity, that in the Holy Eucharist, as a consequence of the Institution of Christ, there is by the working of God's Almighty power a *real though spiritual* presence of the body and blood of Christ."

"That of this body and blood of the Lord, the faithful worshippers, when they eat and drink the consecrated elements, are made partakers to the strengthening and refreshing of their souls."

"That the unfaithful receivers of this sacrament do not, in partaking of the elements, partake of Christ; but receiving the Sacrament unworthily, 'thereby purchase to themselves damnation.'"[1]

In a published sermon the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon expresses very much the same idea. "But do not men receive the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper? Yes. Spiritual men do, in a real and spiritual sense, but not in a carnal sort; not so as to crush it with their teeth, or taste it with their palate. . . . But they receive the Lord Jesus, as incarnate, and crucified, into their spirits, as they believe in Him, love Him, and are comforted by thoughts of Him. But how is that a real reception of Him? cries one. Alas! this question reveals at once the world's thoughts; ye think the carnal alone real, and that the spiritual is unreal. If you can touch and taste ye think it real, but if you can only meditate and love, you deem it to be unreal. How impossible it is for the carnal

[1] See p. 238, "Life of Bishop Wilberforce."

mind to enter into spiritual things! Yet hearken once again: I receive the body and blood of Christ when my soul believes in His incarnation, when my heart relies upon the merit of His death, when the bread and wine so refresh my memory, that thoughts of Jesus Christ and His agonies melt me to penitence, cheer me to confidence, and purify me from sin. It is not my body which receives Jesus, but my spirit; I believe in Him, casting myself alone upon Him; trusting Him, I feel joy and peace, love and zeal, hatred of sin and love of holiness, and so as to my spiritual nature I am fed upon Him. My spiritual nature feeds upon truth, love, grace, promise, pardon, covenant, atonement, acceptance, all of which I find, and much more, in the person of the Lord Jesus. Up to the extent in which my spirit has communion with the Lord Jesus, the ordinance of breaking of bread is living and acceptable, because the spiritual element quickens it; but to the extent in which I merely receive the bread and wine, and my spirit is not exercised about Jesus Christ—to that extent it profiteth me nothing—it is a mere external ceremony and nothing more. The bread is only bread, the wine is merely wine, the eating is simply eating bread and no more; the whole outward ceremony is what it seems to be and not a jot more; but the unseen fellowship of hearts with Jesus, this is the quickening element, and this alone."

Mr. C. H. Macintosh, a well-known writer among

the Brethren, says—"The Blessed Master knew well the tendency of our hearts to slip away from Him, and from each other, and to meet this tendency was *one*, at least, of His objects in the institution of the Supper. He would gather His people *around His own blessed Person*—He would spread a table for them, where, in view of His broken body and shed blood, they might remember Him, and the intensity of His love for them; and from whence, also, they might look forward into the future, and contemplate the glory of which the Cross is the everlasting foundation. There, if anywhere, they would learn to forget their differences, and to love one another—there, they might see around them those whom THE LOVE OF GOD had invited to the feast, and whom the BLOOD OF CHRIST had made fit to be there. The wine is *the memorial* of a life shed out for sin: the bread is *the memorial* of a body broken for sin: but we are not gathered round a life poured out, nor round a body broken, *but round a living Christ*, who dieth no more, who cannot have His body broken any more, or His blood shed any more."

Similar language is used by that eminent servant of God, Dr. Horatius Bonar, of the Free Church of Scotland, in speaking of the nature of the presence of Christ in the Holy Communion: "He knew what was best for His Church in all ages, and He has chosen this simple way of providing for her wants, of kindling her love, of strengthening her faith, of quickening her life. In obeying this

command she bears testimony before the world to the *presence of an unseen Lord;* while reminding herself of the promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. xxviii. 20).

"In the bread we 'discern the Lord's body,' and in the wine His blood. *Faith realises a present Christ*, though the eye sees Him not, and the ear hears Him not. Christ present to *faith* is the great Protestant sacramental truth. Christ present to the *senses* is the great Popish falsehood. Faith brings Him nearer than the senses can; so that we can say as truly as if we saw, heard, and touched, Christ is here. It is not at the table of an absent Christ that we sit down. He Himself brings us into His banqueting-house, and His banner over us is love."

Dr. Candlish says—"The communion that believers have with Christ at His table may be illustrated by what He said to His disciples at the first communion table: 'He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.' 'If a man love Me he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him' (John xiv. 21–23). Something like this we find where there is strong affection and mutual understanding and trust between men, even by the natural working of our mental and moral

constitution. If man can have communion in thought with his fellow-mortal, who is dead and gone, and only present to the mind by his recorded or remembered words; who shall doubt that there may be a far more real and intimate communion between our spirit and that Saviour *who is not dead but living, and everywhere present?* Instead of the mere working of memory, affection and imagination, we have the agency of the Spirit of God, who has direct access to our spirits, and who takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. Thus there is *a real though spiritual presence of Christ* in the Lord's Supper, and a real fellowship of our souls with Him."

By a careful comparison of the foregoing views of men, who represent very different sections of Christianity, we find that God's people are pretty well agreed, that the blessings to be looked for are spiritual ones; and that the presence of Christ is a spiritual one in the hearts of His believing children.

Military writers tell us that Napoleon's personal presence in the battlefield, was worth a whole brigade. He had that peculiar power, so hard to define but so easy to understand, which marks the leader of men, of being able by his presence to stimulate others to heroic actions, and to encourage by example. The faint-hearted took courage again; the weary frame was urged on by the mind, which, in its turn, was prompted by a master-mind. Is not this a faint resemblance of that presence which

has been promised to the Church in all ages? "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Does it not sustain the weak one struggling with besetting sin? Does it not cheer the afflicted one almost overwhelmed with sorrow? Was it not that presence that helped the early Christian Church, amidst all the persecutions of the heathen? It is recorded that in the subterranean catacombs a hand with the finger pointing upwards was frequently depicted, telling of the Christian's hope. The heathen used also to depict what they considered to be the joys of the future life; but as a rule they consisted of the mere reproduction of the joys of this life. The finger pointing upwards seems to denote that Christ alone is the hope of the Christian. He who has risen and gone before, to prepare one of the "many mansions" above, is the One the believer's soul longs after; His unseen spiritual presence here below makes the Christian long for His real presence above. It is this hope which sustains him in the conflict with sin.

PART I.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOLY COMMUNION—AS A MEANS OF GRACE.

WHEN we speak of a certain thing being a means of grace, we mean that it is through its instrumentality that we receive a spiritual blessing. But all spiritual blessings are received through faith; therefore that which increases and strengthens our faith, or resuscitates it when it has sunk to a low ebb, aids our reception of spiritual blessings, and as such is a medium for them to our souls. It is in this sense that we speak of the Lord's Supper as a means of grace. It stimulates our faith, by bringing before the mind's eye the death of our Saviour. Moreover, inasmuch as it sets forth the death of Christ, more distinctly than any other religious ceremony, and was also appointed by our Lord Himself, it is often spoken of as the highest means of grace. There is, however, no authority for this expression in the Word of God. As all are not constituted alike, and have not similar temperaments, it is probable that

that which is the highest to one, may be quite secondary to another. There can, however, be little doubt, that it is the highest act of worship God's people can unitedly engage in, and that it should commend itself to all for the help that it affords.

Some, mistaking the nature of the blessing to be received, have been disappointed. They went expecting a conscious blessing, perceptible to the senses. They looked for it in the form of some spiritual heavenly emotion, or some immediate strengthening of their faith; and because they did not get what they expected, they have considered themselves deceived. But because they were not conscious of a marked blessing, then and there, it is no proof that they did not receive one. In the *first* place, we must remember that the efficacy of the Lord's Supper is no more tied to the exact moment of time than in the case of the other Sacrament, that of Baptism. The adult convert from heathenism often receives a very marked spiritual blessing at his baptism; but then, it is not always the case that he is conscious of it. It is so with the other means of grace, such as the reading of God's Word, private prayer, and the assemblies of God's people. Sometimes we feel fully conscious of communicated good. But all experienced children of God will admit, that they are not always then and there aware of the good they have received. As with the other means of grace, so is it with the Lord's Supper. In the second place, we must bear in mind that often we

receive benefits when we little know it, and sometimes from a direction that we little thought of. We may rest assured that God will honour His own ordinances, and that, rightly received, the sacred feast will be crowned with His sacred benediction. This is enough for the faithful believer. He can trust his God to know best what form that blessing shall take, and when it shall be given. The very withholding of it to our consciousness is sometimes God's way of testing the faith of His children, and eventually of strengthening it.

Man, as we know, is a complex creature, so constituted that he cannot do without external rites and ceremonies. In the *first* place, he needs them as a bond of union between his fellow-creatures and himself; for, as Augustine says, "In no name of religion, true or false, can men be assembled, unless united by some common use of visible signs or sacraments." In the *second* place, he needs them to give expression to his devotional feelings. In the *third* place, he needs them to stimulate and strengthen the spiritual life. Some doubtless need the external part of religion less than others, and can maintain a high standard of spiritual life without many such external aids.

Who that has witnessed the powerful effect that Sankey's sacred hymns and songs has had on multitudes in England, can doubt this fact? No one would seriously maintain that we cannot worship God without music; but none the less would any deny

that music, if adapted to the tastes and education of the people, has a very powerful effect in appealing to the emotional part of man's nature. While some natures are not easily reached through their emotions, there are those who can hardly be reached in any other way. That which the eye can see, the ear can hear, and the senses can appreciate, appeals to them far more powerfully than the most logical abstract reasoning. It was doubtless in recognition of this truth, that our Saviour appointed the Lord's Supper as an external aid to the devotion of His people :—

> " He devised the Feast of Love,
> Thus the coldest heart to move,
> Thus to bring Himself more near,
> Thus to make Himself more dear.
> On the sacred symbols feasting,
> All the love of Jesus tasting,
> All the Spirit's grace and power—
> Oh ! the sweetness of the hour."

Some men have the gift of bringing things more vividly before the mind than others. In the same way certain acts recall certain scenes more vividly than others. The Lord's Supper makes that scene on Calvary more real to us, and reminds us of it when we should often otherwise forget it. In the Bible, we have the written word telling us the details of that soul-stirring event. We need only turn to its sacred pages to *read* about the tragedy of the great atoning Sacrifice. We *hear* about it from the preacher, as

he attempts to, graphically, describe the scene and tells us of the benefits we derive from our participation in the offering then made. But in the Lord's Supper we *see* with our eyes the whole scene acted over again. Luther used to speak of it as a "visible word presenting that to the soul through the eye, which the spoken word presents through the ear."

Sacramental signs are ordained of Christ; and when used in faith, God works through them inwardly and effectually in the heart of the believer. Our Prayer Book in Article xxv. says, "They be sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and God's good-will toward us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him." As the early Church became corrupt, it gradually lost sight of the most important condition, viz. faith. It kept up the outward sign only, and was consequently obliged to attribute an efficacy to the material thing itself, whether water, bread, or wine. See, for instance, Ambrose's account of his brother Satyrus being saved, when shipwrecked, by having a piece of the consecrated bread tied in a scarf round his neck, as mentioned by Dr. Jacob in his "Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament." A magical power was attributed to the bread itself after due consecration by a priest.

It is true that the nature of the communion that God's people hold with their Saviour, is not distinct in kind at the Lord's Supper from what it

is at any other time. In the proper use of other ordinances, in seasons of sickness, in times of trial; at periods of special heart-searching meditation, God's people have been able to find that the presence of Christ, and the consequent blessing, are by no means confined to the Lord's Supper. And on this account some have said, "If that is so, then this rite is superfluous." In the *first* place, we may rest assured that our Lord, knowing human nature as He did, ordained *nothing* that was superfluous. In the *second* place, obedience to His will must of necessity bring its own reward.

An old Scotch divine named Bruce, in 1590 A.D., very ably meets this argument of the ordinance being superfluous: "Having the Son of God, thou hes Him quha is the heir of all things, quha is the King of heaven and earth, and in Him thou hes all things: quhat mair then can thou wish? quhat better thing can thou wish? . . . But suppose it be sa, yit the Sacrament is not superfluous. But would thou understand quhat new thing thou gets, quhat other thing thou gets? I will tell thee. Suppose thou get that same thing quhilk thou gat in the Word, yit thou gets that same thing better; quhat is that better? Thou gets a better grip of that same thing in the Sacrament nor thou gat be the hearing of the Word. . . . I say, we get this new thing—we get Christ better than we did before; we get the thing that we gat mair fullie, that is, with a surer apprehension nor we had of before; we

get a better grip of Christ now; for be the Sacrament my faith is nourished, the bounds of my soull is enlarged, and sa, quhere I had but a little grip of Christ before, as it were betwixt my finger and my thumbe, now I get Him in my haill hande; and ay the mair that my faith growes, the better grip I get of Christ Jesus." [1]

The apostle tells us, Heb. xi. 6, that the Lord is "a rewarder of them that *diligently* seek Him." We may rest assured that this applies as much to the diligent search for Him in the public ordinances, as in the private use of the means of grace. It is by no means unworthy of comment that God honoured His own appointed day, in the case of the Apostle John, by delivering to him that wonderful revelation, which we now read with so much interest. "I was in the Spirit *on the Lord's day*, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet." That revelation might have been delivered on any other day equally well for aught we are told to the contrary. He who thus honours His own appointed day may well be expected to honour His own appointed ordinances.

Professor Candlish says: "There are few Christians that will not feel that, in the ordinary tenor of their lives, when they have to be occupied with the business and cares of life, it is not easy to maintain close fellowship with Christ, and that the simple but touchingly suggestive symbols of the Lord's

[1] Quoted by Professor Candlish in his book on the Sacraments.

Supper do help them to such spiritual communion as they cannot ordinarily attain without them."

Calvin used to say of the Lord's Supper that "God does not delude us with vain and empty shows, but really bestows what He signifies and seals in the Sacrament." It is Christ's own institution, and therefore we may well expect Him not only to honour it with His Divine presence, but also to make it the means of a direct spiritual blessing. But as the Divine presence itself is only present in the heart of the true believer; so the direct spiritual blessing can only be received through the medium of faith. To the humble soul, to whom the beautiful words, "Feed on Him in thy heart by faith," are no hollow form, it cannot fail to be a means of grace. As food strengthens the natural body, so by feeding on Christ by faith the spiritual life is strengthened and sustained. By this spiritual participation of His body and blood we become more and more partakers of the Divine nature, and our nature becomes more closely assimilated with His, in the same way that the natural food we swallow becomes a part of our natural body, and thus imparts strength to it. As one writer puts it; "we receive fresh strength and power to overcome temptation, sin, and self, power to witness more boldly in behalf of Him whose we are and whom we serve, power to 'offer and present unto' God 'ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice.'"

PART I.

CHAPTER IX.

HOLY COMMUNION—ITS DEFINITE TEACHING.

WHEN God was giving instructions to Moses for the due observance of the passover, He takes it for granted that the children of the rising generation will ask their parents the question, "What mean ye by this service?" (Ex. xii. 26.) As in the case of the passover, so also in the case of that divinely-appointed religious ceremony, which took its place, the same inquiry will continually be made. Such a question of course cannot be answered in a few brief words; but the simplest view that can perhaps be taken of the matter, is contained in the words used in reference to the passover (Ex. xiii. 9). "It shall be for a *sign* unto thee." It is an external ceremony that calls attention to itself, and arouses the curiosity of those who witness it, to ask its meaning. The whole account of our Saviour's death might be believed, and be universally accepted as a matter of creed, without ever arresting the attention of out-

siders. The stranger who visits London for the first time, and drives about, observing all the great monuments which commemorate grand and noble deeds, naturally makes inquiry respecting them, asks why they were erected, and thus gradually gets to learn much of the history of this country. In the same way the continual celebration of the Lord's Supper, has a direct missionary influence on outsiders, who are led to make inquiries concerning the origin of the rite, as they witness it from time to time. What the diagram does for the student; what the illustrated book of history does for the schoolboy; this external ceremony does for the uninitiated; it explains and conveys to their understanding, through the instrumentality of the eye, the scene that occurred on Calvary. The apostle says, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do *show* the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26). When we speak of celebrating the Lord's Supper, we convey the same idea. To celebrate is to make famous, to distinguish by solemn ceremonies. Each time we celebrate, we publish to the outside world the announcement of the death of Christ on Calvary.

The celebration of the Holy Communion has, moreover, an important position as an evidence of the truth of Christianity, and the existence of our Saviour. When we find monuments erected on battlefields; and read from writers, who were contemporaries of those who fought, of the details of the fight, we have no reason to doubt that such a

battle took place, and that such a site was once the scene of conflict. Such a monument is the Lord's Supper, which commemorates the most terrible contest that the world has ever seen, that strange conflict between the incarnate Son of God and sin, the "seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent." Like the warrior who feels assured of victory, and erects before the battle a monument of his success; so the Lord's Supper was appointed on the eve of that strange contest, which has baffled human understanding, to be a sign or a witness unto coming generations that He whose right it is, has led captivity captive. No doubt can exist as to the antiquity of the institution, since fortunately enemies of the truth, such as Pliny, Tacitus, Celsus and Porphyry, who lived so close to the time of our Saviour, made reference to it.

The Sacred Feast is, however, something more than a sign, which is but rather an abstract idea. It is a keepsake or memorial, left behind by our Saviour in token of His love, to each individual member of His Church. Through it He from time to time conveys to His little flock assurances of His regard. A sign has not necessarily anything of that personal nature about it which a keepsake implies. Our Saviour, when instituting the Lord's Supper, said, "This do in remembrance of Me." The Heavenly Bridegroom, ere He quits the earthly scene, leaves behind Him a pledge of His love; and each time the bride looks at it she does

so "in remembrance" of His faithfulness to her. He is away, but He will return.

Professor Candlish says, "Just as very small and trifling things in themselves, that to a stranger would be utterly valueless, acquire in our eyes a perfectly priceless value when they have been given as tokens of a deep and strong love; so the simple, poor, and mean-looking ordinances of Baptism and the Supper; just the application of a little water and the eating a morsel of bread and a sip of wine, are to the earnest Christian more precious than any other outward thing he has, since they are the memorials of that love that is deeper, stronger, and tenderer than any others; and that is the centre of his new life."

It may, perhaps, be impossible to define the effects that a keepsake would have on an individual. Probably it differs according to each varying temperament. As we are not all similarly constituted, we need not expect the same manifestation of it from everyone concerned. The general effect, however, of such a keepsake or memorial as our Saviour has left to us, must be to stimulate us each time we witness it to examine ourselves, and ascertain if we are doing all we can in the absence of our Lord that He would wish us to do. Are we prepared to receive Him back again? Do our hearts respond and say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Are we living as we should desire to live were He suddenly to return to our

midst? Or like the ten virgins, who, while the Bridegroom tarried, "all slumbered and slept," have we forgotten that our mission is to do His will on earth? Have the thoughts of other things so occupied our minds, that we have no time for Him who gave His life for us?

The importance of a keepsake, we estimate not by any intrinsic value it may possess, but by the esteem we put on the donor. The man of the world may look on the Lord's Supper as a mean and contemptible religious ceremony; it reminds him of nothing that he values, and so he naturally despises it. But that little bit of broken bread, and simple taste of wine reminds God's people of Him "whom their soul loveth." To them "He is the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely;" and anything that bids them pause in the midst of the exciting scenes and engagements of life, to "consider Him who is the Apostle and High Priest of their profession, Christ Jesus," must at least be welcome.

The value of a keepsake is increased by the promises which accompany it, which, in the case of the Lord's Supper, are, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," and, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." As each little band of faithful believers assemble themselves together throughout the whole world, they have this assurance, that He who founded the Church, and He

who instituted this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, will never leave them nor forsake them.

It has moreover to the believer, the effect of strengthening his faith, and rekindling from time to time his love to his Saviour. The affectionate husband, who has left his wife in England, may for hours together be so engrossed with his professional duties, and occupations, as never to give her a single thought, till perchance he sees some likeness or keepsake, which reminds him of her. Then the flame of love is kindled afresh, and all the old associations are awakened. But such seasons of forgetfulness, if continued for any lengthened periods, and if means are not used to resuscitate the regard that once truly existed, must have a bad effect. The memory of her image will grow fainter and fainter. As in the ordinary relationship of life, so in the spiritual relationship between the individual believer and his Saviour. True love may exist; but such are the duties and engagements of life that the mind is often engrossed with other things. If such seasons were to be long and continuous, doubtless the spiritual life would sink to a low ebb.

Men of science, men of letters, and great political reformers, are commemorated by centenaries, jubilees, and anniversaries. The third great Lutheran Centenary has lately aroused and created an interest in the work of the Fathers of the Reformation. Our Lord, who always worked in accordance with the natural

laws of the human heart, has appointed that His death shall be commemorated at special seasons, in order that there may be rekindled in the soul of each individual believer, the flame of love that is so liable to be smothered by the all-engrossing anxieties and cares of life.

The frequent recollection of Christ's sufferings for us, should have a constraining effect on our hearts and lives. It calls forth gratitude, and creates love, which, in its turn, begets obedience to His will. The Dean of Peterborough says: "It reminds us of what ought to be the perpetual attitude of our hearts and lives. It tells us, it speaks eloquently to us, of a daily feeding on Christ, of a daily coming to the Fountain open for sin and uncleanness, of a daily occasion to exercise brotherly love, and to draw closer together those spiritual bonds in which as Christians we are bound one to another. It reminds us that without Him we can do nothing; that as He gives us His most precious body and blood in that Holy Sacrament, so He gives us all spiritual succour and refreshment whenever and wherever we draw near to Him in faith. It is a witness to us that as He loved us and gave Himself for us, so we are not our own, but are bought with a price; that He claims us for His service and sends us forth, His consecrated priests, with the sprinkled blood upon our consciences, that we may glorify God in our body and in our spirit which are His."

I have elsewhere endeavoured to point out that by Baptism we enter into the covenant of grace. At his conversion the believer realises the benefit of that covenant, and each time he comes to the Lord's Supper he publicly renews his pledge to the Lord to be His faithful servant; and to the Church, the body of believers, he renews his engagement to be one with them. By that act of fellowship and communion, he publicly professes what Ruth said to Naomi, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Dr. Bonar says: "The *bread is the bread of the Covenant;* for of old whosoever did eat another's bread, did in that very act enter into fellowship with him. To eat even a stranger's bread was to covenant with him. To sit at one table, to eat of one loaf, was the seal of friendship. Hence the deep meaning of the Messiah's words, 'He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me' (Ps. xli. 9); and again, 'He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me' (Matt. xxvi. 23).

"The wine is the *wine of the Covenant.* 'This cup is the New Testament (Covenant) in My blood' (1 Cor. xi. 25). It is covenant-wine of which we drink; it is covenant-wine which fills 'the cup of blessing,' 'the cup of salvation,' 'the cup of the Lord' (1 Cor. x. 21). The blood of which that wine speaks to us, is 'the blood of the everlasting covenant' (Heb. xiii. 20); the covenant 'ordered in all things and sure' (2 Sam. xxiii. 5); the blood by

which He has made peace upon the cross (Col. i. 20); the blood by which He has redeemed, and washed, and reconciled us (Rev. i. 5; v. 9; Rom. v. 10); the blood in which He has washed both our persons and our robes (Rev. vii. 14). It is the covenant-blood, the sacrificial blood, the blood of the new covenant that has done all this."

Moreover the very attendance of the believer at the Lord's table teaches the necessity of a public profession of his faith. In the American war a woman is reported to have accompanied a certain regiment carrying a flag. When asked what she could do, she replied, "Well, I may be helpless and unable to do much good; but at all events I can show whose side I am on." The open confession of the cause of Christ has a distinct advantage. It encourages others to follow the example set, by inspiring more timid ones with confidence; and strengthens the choice of the individual who makes the profession. Publicly availing ourselves of the privilege of drawing near to the Lord's table is an outward showing of our colours, a declaration of the side we are on. It requires no small courage, as many a young believer knows from personal experience, to become a communicant; to remain behind when others turn their backs on the Lord's table. We may rest assured that such will receive a distinct blessing, and will by degrees acquire more and more strength to witness for their Lord and Master.

The Lord's Supper symbolises certain of the great

important fundamental truths of Christianity. When we see the bread broken, our thoughts naturally turn to that suffering, bruised body of His, hanging on the cross with pierced wounds; the blood from which is symbolized by the wine. As the communicant partakes of the bread and wine, and thus sustains the physical life, he is reminded that Christ, who is the "true bread" and the "vine," can alone sustain the spiritual life. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John vi. 53). It moreover represents the union between the believer and his Saviour. The food we eat, and the wine we drink, not only strengthen the physical life, but become a part of the body itself. As we receive and partake of that food, so are we taught the necessity of a participation in Him who is thereby symbolised. When we swallow the bread and thus appropriate it as our own; how natural to ask ourselves, Have I really appropriated Christ as *my* Saviour? If so, have I *fully* appropriated Him? Am I daily learning more and more of His power? "The people that *know* their God shall be strong." It is possible to have a property without knowing its full value. There may be hidden mineral resources unknown to the owner. It is possible to be a child of God, and to know what the Saviour has done for us, without knowing all He is prepared to do for us, if we will only trust Him.

It has been remarked that "bread is the natural

symbol of all that supports our physical life," therefore it must be a beautiful symbol of that Living Bread which came down from heaven. As bread, the symbol of all food, strengthens the body, so Christ alone is the source of strength to the believer. It is His strength which enables him to be more than conqueror, in the daily conflict with besetting sin, subduing the sinful lusts of the flesh. His flesh "is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed."

"His body, broken in our stead,
We see in this memorial bread;
And so our feeble love is fed
Until He come.

His fearful drops of agony,
His life-blood, shed for us we see;
The wine shall tell the mystery
Until He come."

Not only is union required between Christ and the communicant, but the Lord's Supper teaches that unity should exist between the communicants themselves. The Bishop of Carlisle points out that the last of the three conditions mentioned in answer to the question, "What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper is that they 'be in charity with all men.'" That "one loaf" speaks of one body in which all are united, of which Christ is the Head. It is rather an unfortunate thing that in our Communion Services we lose the idea of *one* bread, inasmuch as the bread is

usually divided into little squares before being issued, only one of which is broken by the officiating minister. The bread is divided for the sake of convenience, as the difficulty would be very much increased of administering the Lord's Supper to large numbers if the original plan was adhered to of passing *one* loaf round, and letting each communicant break off a piece. It is, however, a question, whether it would not have been wiser in the Communion Service, to have followed the plan adopted in the Baptismal Service regarding the water. The principle of immersion has been maintained; but the practice of sprinkling, being more convenient and suitable to our climate, is allowed as an alternative. In the same manner, it might have allowed that when the numbers of communicants were few one small loaf entire should be blessed and broken, as our Saviour is usually depicted doing when about to institute the Lord's Supper. This, however, is a matter of minor importance, as long as the great fundamental truth of the unity of the Church is maintained with all its attendant consequences, such as the care each member should have of the others. If each of the richer brethren felt more their obligations to the poorer, and the strong ones considered more the weak, the outside world would see that we were in the real sense of the word one body, of which "the members should have the same care for one another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be hon-

oured, all the members rejoice with it." "For we being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."

In connection, with this dividing the bread beforehand into little squares, we lose also the original custom of passing the bread round among the communicants. At the Reformation some of the Swiss Reformers attached great importance to this, believing it to be in accordance with our Saviour's words (Luke xxii. 17). "Take this and *divide it among yourselves.*" A letter still exists, written by Zwingle to the King of France, in defence of the old custom being revived. He says, "It has often been found that some who happened to sit together, but who had formerly had feuds and hatred one with another, in thus partaking together either of the bread or of the cup, have laid aside the passions of their minds." There can be no doubt what the early custom was, and it might have been well if our Communion Service had maintained the principle. We are not, however, bound to follow the original institution in mere matters of detail. It must be remembered that the early disciples were men of a similar station in life, and would have no objection to receiving the bread from each other. Many a refined, delicate-minded lady would perhaps shrink, from partaking of bread passed round a large number of people, many of whom, though honest, labouring people, might have hands not too cleanly. Christianity leaves its followers,

to adapt trifling matters of detail to the customs of the age and of the people.

Professor Candlish mentions what he considers to be some symbolical teaching of the Lord's Supper, regarding the plan of salvation. He says, "It illustrates very strikingly the freeness of the gospel offer, in the simple giving of the elements without price or condition; all that is required on our part being simply the taking of what is presented to us by God in Christ. . . . The simplicity of faith is shown by its being represented under the figure of eating and drinking, the most natural and instinctive acts of human nature. . . . . Just as bread and wine nourish and invigorate the bodily life of man, so this ordinance teaches us, does Christ when received and fed upon by faith, give and sustain the life of the soul."

The same writer says also, "In this ordinance we not only look at the symbols of Christ's death, but we receive and feed upon them, and so it symbolises further our participation in Christ as crucified for us. As the bread and wine are not only held up for contemplation, but held forth for our reception, we are taught that the Saviour is not only presented as an object of historical belief and admiration, but offered to us for personal appropriation."

PART I.

CHAPTER X.

HOLY COMMUNION—THE GUESTS AND SELF-EXAMINATION.

HAVING so far considered the institution itself, it may not be out of place to pass on to the question, as to what persons are invited to the feast. Dr. Bonar points out that Christ invited "the *multitude*" to sit down on the grass and be fed, when He was preaching the gospel to them; but that when He was about to institute the Lord's Supper He said, "Where is the guest-chamber where I shall eat the passover with *my disciples?*" (Mark xiv. 14.) He preached to *thousands* and ministered to their physical wants; but He invited only *twelve* to the sacred feast; thus showing that it was appointed, not for the world at large, but for the Church alone. Regarding the passover, we are told "There shall no stranger eat thereof" (Ex. xii. 43). The true Israel of God were alone welcome. The nations that knew not Jehovah were not invited. As in the type, so in the antitype; only those are invited

as guests who have received the wedding garment. Such also is the teaching of our Church in the invitation, "Draw near with faith and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort." The Church invites those only, to whom she can say, "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving." The following are the words of the public invitation: "Ye that do *truly and earnestly repent you of your sins*, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways. Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort." While inviting *all* to come and hear the gospel, the Church only invites those who have availed themselves of the benefits of the gospel, to become partakers of this sacred feast.

The Bishop of Carlisle [1] points out that the answer in the Prayer Book to the question, "What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?" may be divided into three parts, viz.:—

1. "To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life."

2. "Have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death."

3. "Be in charity with all men."

[1] "The Worthy Communicant," by the Lord Bishop of Carlisle

It will be observed, that the first two conditions laid down clearly indicate, that those who drew up our Prayer Book intended none but true believers "steadfastly purposing to lead a new life" to be invited. The Bishop of Carlisle says, "Beyond all doubt this *must* be required, and it is a most reasonable requirement; for to take no higher view of the Sacrament than this, we may regard it as a mutual pledge given by Christians to each other that they will keep the commands of Christ, . . . and, doubtless, whatever other and deeper meaning the Lord's Supper may have, this it must have, that is, it must be regarded as a pledge of our desire and determination, to live in accordance with the will of Him whom we then most solemnly recognise as our Lord and King."

Whether we turn to that part of the Word of God which deals with the Passover, or that which refers to the Lord's Supper, or to the Prayer Book, it is the true believer, and he alone, who is invited. To him alone can it be a Eucharistic Feast of thanksgiving and praise. Those who have despised, or who have not availed themselves of the benefits to be derived from Christ's death, cannot "take comfort" at the thought of that death. Far better for them that Christ should never have died, than that, having died, they should fail to avail themselves of the benefits of His death. Far from taking comfort they may well tremble, for we are told that those who set Him at nought, will one

day call to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb."

The Apostle Paul says to the Corinthians—"Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup;" and again, to the same people, in the second Epistle, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves" (2 Cor. xiii. 5). If God's people only are invited to this sacred feast, surely the first question for each of us to put to ourselves is, "Am I one of them?" As one writer says, "A token of love, presupposes at least a willingness to receive the love of him who gives it; it would be of no value to one hostile or indifferent to him. So the sacraments are fitted for cherishing and increasing the life of faith when it has already begun; but not for imparting it where it has not been before."

This is a question that no clergyman, parent, or friend can undertake to answer for a person. Such may do much towards helping an intending communicant to come to a right decision; but no man can undertake the solemn responsibility of judging for another. The clergyman is bound to admit the individual on his own profession; except in the cases of notorious evil-livers, who, as a rule, do not present themselves at the Lord's Table. If the person has been truly brought to a knowledge of Christ, he is welcome, however weak may be his faith, to come and partake. But if this has not been the case, such a one only "eateth and drink-

eth unworthily," and consequently "eateth and drinketh damnation (*margin*, judgment) to himself." But why should any poor soul remain in a doubtful position? The feast is prepared. The invitation has gone forth, "Come, for all things are now ready." Let the true penitent come *immediately;* for "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

It is, indeed, a blessed result of self-examination if it reveals to a soul its true state, even though it may for a time keep him from drawing near to the Lord's table. Many a one has never taken the trouble to examine himself, and is therefore utterly unconscious of his condition. Having, however, done it for the first time in the light of God's Holy Word, the enquirer may well stand aghast, to find out how bad he is, in the sight of a holy God. It is not that he is worse than he was before, but that he has for the first time ascertained his true condition. This very sense of sin should lead him to cast himself on the Sin-bearer of the world, the token of whose love for him, even in his lost estate, is set forth at the Lord's Supper. Oh, glorious results of self-examination, when there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth!

The *second* thought in connection with the subject of self-examination, is for the believer. Having realised his union with Christ, and his personal interest in the great work done for him on Calvary, he has again and again partaken of the elements

which so beautifully set forth that finished work. But however many times he may have drawn near, he is not exonerated from obeying the injunction, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." Doubtless this is the reason why the Ten Commandments are inserted in the Communion Service, *before* the actual celebration. Briefly summed up, they remind the communicant of his duty to God and his duty to man, and present so many different headings, on each of which he can examine himself.

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon says: "But before you can remember Christ well here, you must ask the assistance of the Holy Spirit. I believe there ought to be a preparation before the Lord's Supper. I do not believe in Mrs. Toogood's preparation, who spent a week in preparing, and then finding it was not the Ordinance Sunday said she had lost all the week. I do not believe in that kind of preparation; but I do believe in a holy preparation for the Lord's Supper; when we can on a Saturday, if possible, spend an hour in quiet meditation on Christ and the passion of Jesus; when, especially on the Sabbath afternoon, we can devoutly sit down and behold Him, then these scenes become realities, and not mockeries, as they are to some."

Those who have ever made long voyages at sea, will remember how carefully the commander of the vessel, or some officer appointed by him, examines each day his position, by means of observations on

the sun. While some of the passengers are carelessly speculating as to their whereabouts, the responsible officials are making accurate observations. It is too important a matter to leave to speculation; as it is easy for a ship to drift a few degrees to one side or to the other, off the course it ought to pursue. Hidden rocks on either side have sent many a noble ship to the bottom. If, then, careful examination is necessary when mere temporal interests are at stake; how much more careful should we be in spiritual matters when eternal interests are concerned.

The Apostle Paul sets us a noble example in the physical, mental, and spiritual discipline which he voluntarily endured, giving as his reason, "Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Well would it be for many of us if we more fully followed his example. Of course, self-examination, like many other good things, may be abused, and may degenerate into little more than mere morbid self-introspection, which does more harm than good. But wisely and cautiously used, it cannot fail to be an important and useful means of grace. What better time can be appointed than during, or before, Holy Communion, at stated periods, to solemnly search our hearts and ascertain how it is with our spiritual life? What can be done at any time is, as a rule, put off so continually that it is frequently not done at all.

Time glides along almost imperceptibly, and often

we feel quite unconscious of its flight. Without self-examination we should be also unconscious of any change in our spiritual state. Though we may not take note of it, we may be quite sure that we are spiritually, as well as physically, undergoing a thorough change. It is a solemn question that we should put to ourselves, are we advancing, growing in grace, becoming more and more like our Divine Master, or are we taking a retrograde path, being more and more influenced and actuated by the motives that prompt the world? May we never forget that as truly as the force of gravity exists, dragging down every unsupported body, so truly is there a power around us to draw our affections downwards. It should be our object, then, to cultivate every means that helps to draw our affections upwards. Christ said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." He was lifted up on the Cross: and in the Lord's Supper we commemorate that event which has been a great magnetic power for drawing up the affections of thousands and millions—a "vast host that no man can number." There is nothing like a look at Him who hung on the cross at Calvary, to wean our affections from the things of the world.

"Tell me the old, old story,
When you have cause to fear
That this world's empty glory
Is costing me too dear."

PART I.

CHAPTER XI.

HOLY COMMUNION—THE DAYS OF CELEBRATION.

HAVING considered the nature of the ordinance and the qualifications for the guests, perhaps the next thing to be considered should be, how often the guests should attend the sacred feast. In the case of the passover, of which we read in the Old Testament, we find that it was observed annually. But when we turn to the New Testament, with its many increased privileges, we find that during the revival which followed on Pentecost, the rejoicing believers appear to have met together, to break bread on the first day of the week (Acts xx. 7). The Church has wisely refrained from laying down any instructions on the subject, beyond merely appointing a minimum limit of three times in a year. During seasons of revival and blessing, who would dare to place a maximum limit to the number of times believers should together communicate with their Saviour? If a frequent maximum limit was ap-

pointed, it would soon degenerate into a standard of formality, each one feeling that he had to partake so many times in a year, or in a month, whether there was any spiritual response or not.

The frequency with which God's people should communicate, not having been mentioned in the Bible, it has become very much a matter of custom in different countries, different Churches, and different ages. Among the Boers in South Africa, in a large country, with a thinly scattered population, physical obstacles, such as swollen rivers, hilly districts, absence of means of locomotion, a half-yearly or even an annual celebration of the ordinance is considered sufficient. I have thought, when present at a celebration in which many of these rough, hardy farmers must have ridden over a hundred miles, frequently exposed to great dangers, how often would Englishmen communicate under similar circumstances? The Scotch peasantry, who again are scattered about over moors and hills, as a rule do not communicate oftener than half-yearly or quarterly. In the larger towns that are growing up, the custom of such long intervals being permitted between communions, is dying out gradually, and more frequent opportunities are being given. Even in England, in some of the old country parishes such innovations as monthly communion have hardly yet found their way.

It must not, however, be thought that long intervals show any disregard for the ordinance. It is

rather the result of old customs, when there were obstacles in the way of more frequent communions. It will almost invariably be found that where long intervals are permitted, very great regard is paid to the ordinance itself, when the day does arrive. The Boers and the Scotch are both strong proofs of this. Even the women in South Africa frequently spend a fortnight, exposed to great dangers, going to the Lord's Supper in a waggon drawn by sixteen oxen. The Sacrament sometimes extends over many hours of the day. As regards the Scotch, an interesting little bit appears in the Queen's diary describing the Communion Sunday at a Scotch kirk, showing how greatly impressed she was at the celebration of the ordinance.

"It was all so truly earnest, and no description can do justice to the perfect devotion of the whole assemblage. It was most touching, and I longed much to join in it." (Since 1873, says the Queen in a footnote, I have regularly partaken of the Communion at Crathie every autumn, it being always given at that time.) "To see all these simple, good people in their nice plain dresses (including an old woman in her mutch), so many of whom I knew, and some of whom had walked far, old as they were, in the deep snow, was very striking. Almost all our own people were there. We came home at twenty minutes before two o'clock."

The general rule in England is to have communion

monthly or weekly. Two of the most opposite extremes, the Ritualists and the Plymouth Brethren, attach very great importance to the ordinance being partaken of every week, as more in accordance with scriptural precedent. I was once staying with a general officer who had held a high command out in India, and was a bit of an autocrat. As he had joined the Brethren, I asked him if he happened to know an eminent man of their body. "Yes," said he, "I had occasion to rebuke him very sharply for a want of discipline the last time he came here, for preaching the gospel in the morning." On my remarking that I hardly thought the mere fact of preaching the gospel in the morning a serious offence, he replied, "The Brethren *always* break bread every Lord's Day in the morning, and he should not have been away preaching the gospel, as he could have done that in the evening. Why, he could not have broken bread at all that day!"

It must, however, be borne in mind that it was during a season of great revival, that the early Church communicated so often. We have no record that such was the intention of the Great Founder of the institution. I am not, however, aware of any argument in favour of monthly, as opposed to quarterly communions, that are not equally applicable to weekly as opposed to monthly celebrations, always supposing that the desire to such frequent communions is not the result of mere formalism. If true that the Apostolic Church broke bread every Lord's

day, no reason exists why the Church of the nineteenth century should not do so.

The frequency with which God's people partake is, after all, not such an important matter as the value they attach to the spiritual benefits, derived from obedience to their Lord's command, "This do in remembrance of Me," and the right understanding of the nature of the ordinance. Frequent communion may arise from a misunderstanding of the nature of the benefits to be derived, and a superstitious regard for the ordinance itself; or it may arise from a heart in full communion with God, and longing for the privileges of the outward expression of that spiritual desire. Long intervals, on the other hand, may arise from a negligent, careless indifference, not sufficiently realising the inestimable benefits of the institution; or they may arise from a very great regard for the ordinance, and a fear that, being too frequently repeated, this external aid should become too familiar and ordinary, to be of such great benefit, as when used at longer intervals. Certain it is that those who communicate frequently, and those who do not, practically acquire very different views of the ordinance. Those who go in so strongly for frequent communion seem to speak of it in much the same way as they would of family prayers in the morning. I do not say that they are wrong in doing so; I merely record it as an opinion formed from observation. Far from being wrong, I think it is quite in accordance with human nature. That

which is frequently done has a strong tendency to become ordinary. As, however, the Bible does not say how often the rite is to be celebrated, and our Church has not committed itself to any definite statement on the subject, beyond fixing a minimum limit, it is for each child of God to decide for himself, how often he should partake of the Lord's Supper.

The next thing to be considered is on what days should Holy Communion be celebrated? Dean Stanley has pointed out that the day of the original institution was Thursday. It was on the eve of the day preceding our Lord's death, which is supposed to have been on a Friday. The Church, however, attaches no importance to the commemoration of the actual day of the week. The same writer states that Calvin did make an effort to get the Church to recognise the original day, but his suggestion was never carried out. Though the day of the week has been almost forgotten, the Roman Catholics, and a certain section of our own Church, once in a year commemorate the Thursday preceding Good Friday, viz., Holy Thursday.

When we turn to the Word of God we find that the "first day of the week," the resurrection-day, was universally recognised as the proper day on which to commemorate our Saviour's love to us. His death would have been of no avail to us had He not risen again, showing that He had power over death itself. It is a thanksgiving feast; so

that our thoughts should dwell on victory. "He hath led captivity captive." The early Christians, doubtless led by the Spirit of God, took a joyous view of the feast; and, though no command exists to commemorate the events of their Saviour's death on any particular day, they doubtless saw that by breaking bread on the Lord's day, the thoughts of believers for all time would be turned to Christ's victory over death, His resurrection from the grave, and the hope of His final appearing.

PART I.

CHAPTER XII.

HOLY COMMUNION—AT WHAT TIME OF THE DAY SHOULD THE RITE BE ADMINISTERED?

As the Church attaches no importance to the actual day of the original institution, so it attaches none to the actual hour. The Reformers were above such trifles as calculating what should be the amount of water to be used in baptism, or deciding the hour at which the rite of Holy Communion was first instituted. They refrained from committing themselves to any stated time, but left it open to each minister to act as he shall find it most convenient for the people. In the 21st Canon it says: "The Holy Communion shall be administered by the parson, vicar, or minister, so often, *and at such times* as every parishioner may communicate at least three times in the year." From the rubric in the Communion Service, it is clear that the intention was that the rite should be administered after the sermon. The wording is as follows: "Then shall follow the sermon, or one of the

homilies already set forth, or hereafter to be set forth by authority. Then shall the priest return to the Lord's table, and begin the offertory," &c.

It is related of an eminent dean, that when he was informed that a certain bishop had publicly announced that he would not ordain a man, after he had reached the age of thirty, he quietly remarked, "It is peculiarly unfortunate that he should have selected *just the very age* at which our Lord commenced His ministry on earth, as the limit at which His servants should be forbidden to commence theirs." The thought has, no doubt, often occurred to many, why a certain party in the Church should have selected just that very period of the day when our Lord instituted the Holy Communion as the very time to be avoided by the Church now. To say the least, they have pitched upon a particularly unfortunate time.

Those who are so opposed to evening communions frequently urge that it is an innovation on the practice of the Church for many centuries. This is only one of the many proofs we have, how certain people rigidly adhere to old customs, and get so wedded to them as to think that any innovations must naturally be wrong. It is not so many years ago that evening services were introduced. At one time they were innovations. Before the introduction of gas into our towns, and the proper manufacture of candles for village churches which have no gas, evening services were almost out of the question.

It was not that the Church looked upon them as undesirable, but simply that a practical difficulty existed against them. Those who have read the "Life of Simeon," will remember what a bitter storm of opposition he raised at Cambridge, when he announced that he was going to have an evening service. Even earnest religious people did not like to countenance him in his innovations. Professors of religion are after all like other people; for frequently the love of old customs and associations may warp their judgment. A story is told of a Scotch minister who announced that he was going to try and improve the singing in his church; among other things he intended to give up the old habit of reading out one line at a time to sing. The custom doubtless arose in times when people committed psalms to memory, and sang without books, as they were expensive in those days, and few could read. Each line was read out to assist the memory. The announcement that the time-honoured custom was to be abolished, was received with an outburst of indignation, and a village meeting was summoned, to protest against such an innovation. The minister felt bound to attend the meeting, to hear what had to be said against his very innocent suggestion. An old woman turned to him and said, "To think that you, a minister of the gospel, should be so opposed to God's Word! Does it not say that you are to give us 'line upon line?'" Old customs and habits become very dear to us, and often Scrip-

ture is dragged into the argument with about an equal amount of irrelevancy, when we are merely contending for what we have been accustomed to from our childhood.

It is satisfactory to know that it is becoming more and more recognised, that not only must the Church adapt herself to the habits and customs of the different countries into which she goes; but that if she wishes to retain the position she has acquired as a National Church, she must adapt herself to the ever-changing circumstances of the nation. In London, which we may take as the centre of national life, there were in the year 1882, according to "Mackeson's Guide," 285 churches in which Evening Communion was celebrated, as compared with only 65 in which it was the practice in 1869. Thus in the metropolis alone, within thirteen years, there has been an increase of about 220 churches where the practice is observed. I am informed that the increase in all the other great towns, such as Liverpool and Manchester, is even considerably greater.

Passing on from the actual teaching of the Church, to what some of our leading men have thought on the subject, we find the Bishop of Lincoln saying—"It appears probable that this meeting for breaking of bread took place on the evening of Sunday. It appears, then, that this was a stated day and hour for Christian assemblies; not, perhaps, without some reference to the fact mentioned by St. John concerning the first Lord's-day of the Christian Church.

'The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.' The Holy Supper was instituted on an evening, and it was towards evening when our Lord took bread and blessed it, and gave it to the two disciples at Emmaus. Observe the intimation given, that the primitive Christians assembled specially on the Lord's-day for the reception of the Eucharist, and for hearing the Word."[1]

The Bishop of Worcester thus expressed his views in his charge of 1874. His Lordship says—"No particular time of day is fixed or recommended for the service by authority, though until recently the practice was almost universal of administering the Lord's Supper at the conclusion of the Morning Prayer. The necessary inference from this silence, leaves our clergy at liberty to administer the Holy Communion at any time of day which may be thought most conducive to edification, and leaves every member of our Church also at liberty whether or not, to attend the Lord's Supper fasting. To many persons the long preceding service of Morning Prayer is a most welcome introduction to Holy Communion, leading the thoughts heavenward, and preparing us for the highest point of devotion in the Lord's Supper. By others the most profitable time is found in the early morning, when

[1] Quoted by "Presbyter" in the *Churchman* in an admirable article on Evening Communion.

the spirits are refreshed by sleep, and before the pressure of the daily distractions of earthly care and business. Nor should we hesitate, I think, to administer the Holy Communion in the evening when occasion seems to require it, as in large towns, the occupations of family life leaving no other time so free for the enjoyment of quiet in devotion. Many who have tried the practice of Evening Communions have often assured me that the effect of them is highly beneficial, and that the loss of them would be felt, especially by the poor, as a great and irreparable evil.

"My reverend brethren will allow me to say that I think all these considerations should be duly weighed, in fixing the number and times of administration of the Lord's Supper. The people of our parishes have a right to such opportunities of attending the Lord's Supper as after full consideration of personal and local circumstances appear most conducive to edification. We individually have no right to close what the authority of our Church has left open. If any of us would represent it to be a law of our Church to receive the Holy Communion fasting, we are stating what the truth does not warrant. If we would say that the taking of Holy Communion without fasting is a sin, we are giving countenance to a grievous error touching one of the great points of difference between our Church and the Church of Rome—an error founded on a totally wrong view of the nature

of the Lord's Supper, and of the process by which the faithful communicant eats and drinks our Lord's body and blood in it; an error which obscures the purely spiritual character of that process, and at least favours the notion of such carnal eating and drinking as our Lord condemns in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel."

The Bishop of Peterborough says—"Our Lord does not limit the celebration of the Holy Communion to any special hour of the day. The ordinary time of administration is at the close of the first hour of evening. But at any time of the day or night we are authorised to transport the Church to the bedside, and there to commemorate, and to communicate to a departing or languishing brother, the benefits of the precious death of Christ. In some of our churches early communions have been adopted with great advantage, and without any idea of thus gradually bringing in what is called Low Mass in the Romish Church. . . . In some cases the Eucharist has been administered in the evening of the day of confirmation to all, or all but a few of the catechumens from the parish. Results, however beneficial, would, of course, not tempt a worthy pastor to introduce, or the bishop to sanction, the use of the liberty allowed by our Church, if scriptural, or even reasonable, objections against its use could be made good. But ample warrant there surely is for Evening Communion in the institution of His Supper by the Lord, and in the practice of apostolic and after

times. 'While they were eating, He took the bread, and after supper He took the cup.' Surely our Church does well when she bids us in 'these matters to cleave to the first beginning, hold fast the Lord's tradition, do that in the Lord's commemoration which He Himself did, He Himself commanded, and His apostles confirmed.' . . . Even as to the circumstances of place and time, in themselves indifferent, it is from those who vary from His institution, not from those who accord with it, that apology is due. But I have heard it said that the administration of the Eucharist in the evening by the Lord Himself is not an example to be followed; that it is a mere exception, in no case to be a precedent. This is bold; but I read something bolder still. I read that Evening Communions are a profanation. If so, the reproach cast upon them falls on Christ and His apostles; for His apostles, too, broke the bread at the evening meal: or rather, it shows that in the minds of those who utter it, there are theories which were not in the minds of our Lord or His apostles."

Dean Goulburn, though he honestly states that he prefers Morning Communion, yet says that he can find no scriptural or other arguments against Evening Communion. He says—"It is somewhat noticeable that at the very time when some ecclesiastics in our Church are seeking to re-establish Fasting Communion and insisting upon its observance, others of an opposite school are introducing into

their churches evening celebrations, not indeed as at all essential or obligatory, but as the only way, in their view, of providing opportunities of communicating for certain classes whose engagements do not admit of attendance in the forenoon. Perhaps this is one of the numerous instances of which one extreme of sentiment and practice in the Church begets another—in which the pendulum of thought, having swung in one direction, not only comes back again to the perpendicular position, but swings equally far in the direction opposite. I must be doubly cautious what I say on this subject of Evening Communions, as having personally and for myself a strong instinct against them, which can hardly, I fear, be justified on grounds of reason. It must be admitted that no exception whatever can be taken against Evening Communions, either from the Holy Scriptures or from the Book of Common Prayer, or from the Constitutions and Canons of the Church of England. Nothing, as I believe, can be alleged against them but a very ancient and prevailing custom of the Church, such as is quoted in favour of Fasting Communions, worthy of respect, no doubt, as being very ancient and prevailing, but by no means to be erected into a law of conscience, and capable in its very nature of modification or alteration to meet new circumstances of the Church and new phases of society. And if I personally happen to feel (as I do and many with me) that for myself Communion late in the evening, when the wear and

worry of the day has sensibly told upon the freshness of my mind, is unedifying, I will not, on any account, make my conscience a law for my brother, but will fully believe that he may and does find edification in a different view of the subject, or at all events that he thinks (surely a good and noble sentiment) that his own private edification is to be postponed to that of his flock."

That many have, however, contended against tolerating a custom that is found to be so convenient to the public at large is undeniable; but as a rule their arguments are based on old traditionary customs, which, with all due respect, one cannot help thinking will soon be exploded. Times change, and if our Church does not adapt herself to the wants of the age she will cease to retain the affections of the people. Nothing shows more the absence of any tangible sensible objections than the introduction of such an argument as the following, by a certain bishop in his primary charge. Having praised the system of early Morning Communion, he goes on to say, "I observe with less satisfaction the prevalence, especially in large towns, of Evening Communions. I am by no means prepared to speak of this arrangement in the strong terms of condemnation which are sometimes employed with respect to it; but nevertheless I deeply regret it. I do not indeed regard it, as in itself inherently wrong. That which was, for however short a time, tolerated in apostolic days, cannot have

in it the nature of sin; but, on the other hand, I certainly feel that it is contrary to the mind of the Church, guided, as we profess to believe, by the promised help of the Holy Spirit." One cannot but respect the courage of a man who will speak out his convictions, even though the conclusions he may have arrived at almost amount to the absurd. Had some eccentric but earnest layman propounded such views, they would not have been worthy of comment; but that an earnest-minded bishop, should seriously maintain before a large body of educated clergy, that the example set by our Lord was only for a time *tolerated* by the apostles, and set on one side by them as soon as convenient, comes perilously near the ludicrous. It certainly is satisfactory to know that his lordship does not think that the example of our Lord has "in it the nature of sin," as such would not have been, for "however short a time, tolerated in apostolic days." One has heard of good men, slightly eccentric, who have founded noble institutions, and have intermixed with a great deal that is good, something that is foolish. As soon as such men die, their successors, while carefully observing all that is good and noble, remove every trace of the little eccentricities that once existed. If his lordship was rightly reported on this occasion, it would almost appear that he thought that the practice of the great Founder of Christendom required a little modification at the hands of the Apostolic Church, before it could be handed down as a safe example to the Christians of

the nineteenth century! That an earnest devoted bishop should advocate such views, which one knows he cannot seriously believe in, only shows how party spirit can carry men away, and make them say things, that in their calmer moments, they would utterly repudiate.

As a matter of fact, Evening Communion is very far from being an innovation. It is really going back to the primitive institution. Its having been called a "Supper" denotes the time of day in which it was originated. If we carefully compare Luke xxii. with John xiii. we find that after supper, or "Supper being ended," the Lord first instituted the rite, and then washed the disciples' feet. Judas then "went immediately out; and it was night." That sacred meal preceded that terrible night spent in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Saviour seems to have most fully anticipated the awful trial approaching, and to have sought strength for the conflict, in communion with His disciples and with His Father. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer."

I know there are some who try to make out that the Lord's Supper was delivered after midnight, and therefore in the early morning! Such special pleading only demonstrates the weakness of the cause. The sacred meal took the place of the Jewish Passover, an institution which it is well known was celebrated in the evening, in memory of that awful night when the firstborn of every Egyptian was

struck dead, and the children of Israel were hurriedly entreated to leave the land of Egypt. Our Saviour at the same hour instituted the Holy Communion, and if any inquiries were made as to *where* was the lamb for the sacrifice, doubtless the same answer was given that Abraham gave many centuries before, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

If we were to commemorate Christ's resurrection, the morning hour would be the more suitable time, but as we commemorate His death, one would naturally suppose that as He did not die in the morning, that time would be less suitable than the afternoon or evening. The actual hour at which our Saviour gave up the Ghost was the "ninth hour," Mark xv. 34, which, according to our calculation of time, would be in the afternoon.

It is supposed that the evening for many years was adhered to as the time of day for the early Christians to communicate. The Lord's Supper appears to have been originally preceded by an evening meal, which was called the Agapæ or love-feast. It is worthy of comment that though the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. xi. very severely blames the Corinthians for the abuses that had crept in, he never points out that the evening was wrong, or an undesirable time in which to have it administered. In Acts xx. 7 we find the apostle taking part in a late Communion. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples were come together to

break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."

We have no distinct information as to the cause of the evening hour being abolished. Probably it was found to be more convenient to have it in the morning; and as, unlike the Passover, it was not commanded to be celebrated in the evening, there was no obligation on the early Church to continue it at that time, especially as artificial lights were not as good as they are now. It must be remembered that when the rite was instituted, there were only a few present. Lighting on a large scale would not be required. As numbers increased, this would become more and more a practical difficulty, until the introduction of gas, which enables us to go back to the time of the original institution when found convenient so to do. Dean Stanley contends that the use of candles on the Lord's Table by Roman Catholics, is a relic of the fact, that the rite was celebrated in the evening. He says, "Partly it may have originated in the necessity of illuminating the darkness of the catacombs, but probably its chief origin is their introduction at the Evening Eucharist." Yet by the cruel irony of fate, the very party which is pledged to wage war with Evening Communions, is also pledged to contend for lighted candles at Morning Communions!

As in India, railroads have a perceptible effect in changing the theology of Hindooism, by making high-caste Brahmins and low-caste pariahs of society sit

together in the same carriage, so gas companies are having a visible result in England in more senses than one, in making changes, if not in our theology, at all events in the practical working of our ecclesiastical system. Different hours of the day suit different people. Servants and mothers with large families, must find it almost impossible ever to attend Holy Communion, excepting in the afternoon or evening. Even of those who are not prevented by their duties from attending in the morning, how many there are who are so physically and mentally constituted, that they cannot enjoy then what they would delight in at a later hour. It is not as if those who plead for the evening hour wanted to insist on the others giving up Morning Communion. The evening hour does not interfere with the morning hour. Some there are who like to partake in the quiet of the early morning, before the work of the day commences. Others there are, however, who feel that they can enjoy it better in the calm evening, when the toil and turmoil of the day's work is over. Surely we must learn to live and let live in this busy age? The harsh custom of forcing people, however varied their tastes, duties, and surroundings, to partake at one hard-and-fast stereotyped time will we may hope soon become a thing of the past.

While pleading for toleration in all things in which the Word of God has not laid down fixed laws and rules, one cannot help feeling how reason-

ably God's people may plead for the toleration of that hour, in which our Saviour Himself originated the rite and partook of it.

"It happened on a solemn eventide,
Soon after He that was our Surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village, busied as they went
In musings worthy of the great event;
They spake of Him they loved, of Him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife;
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.

. . . . . .

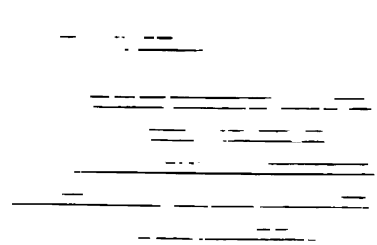
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And made so welcome at their simple feast,
He blessed the bread, but vanished at the word,
And left them, both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord!
Did not our hearts feel all He deigned to say?
Did they not burn within us on the way?"

It is to be feared that the refusal on the part of some, to tolerate the evening as a suitable time for Holy Communion, has arisen not altogether from one motive. The great bulk of those who hold it, are those who object to all change of customs, be they good or bad. But among some of the most earnest opponents of toleration in this matter are found those who are ever pleading for indulgence in changes they are endeavouring to introduce in other directions. As it is not so much from a love of leaving things alone, that these discountenance Evening Communion, we must look

elsewhere for their reasons, and doubtless we find them in a morbid hankering after Fasting Communion. It would be quite out of the question for the majority to abstain from food till the evening; but as some think that the mere fact of receiving the Holy Communion after the recipient has partaken of food is wrong, they oppose Evening Communion, and at the same time advocate having the Lord's Supper before breakfast, so that one sometimes hears of its being celebrated at as early an hour as 5 A.M., and from then up to 8 A.M.

If we go back to the original institution, we find (Matt. xxvi. 21–26) that the rite was administered immediately after a meal, "as they were eating" the feast of the Passover. If we turn to 1 Cor. xi. 34 we find the apostle telling the Corinthians to "eat at home" before they come to the sacred supper.

The Bishop of Lincoln, in his recent charge, thus writes of Fasting Communion: "We need not scruple to say that any members of the Church of England who, on the plea of reverence for the authority of the ancient Church, venture to require fasting as a condition of receiving the Holy Communion, which by the custom of our churches is often not administered till half the Sunday is over, not only set themselves up against the authority of the Church of England—which for the most part administers the Holy Communion at mid-day, or even later, on Sundays—but even against that ancient Church to which they appeal. For what do such



learned Galileos from publicly denouncing its scientific heresies.

Those who have read much on the working of magic, will remember that periods of long abstinence from food have always been closely associated with the anticipated benefits. The body when weak from a want of food will very seriously affect the mind, which in a weakened state, will all the more readily accept the teaching of superstition. The spirit of a superstitious age has stamped itself on the teaching of religious devotees; and it is to this gross piece of materialism that some would now go back. The Dean of Peterborough shrewdly argues that if it is necessary to take the Holy Communion fasting, in order that the Heavenly Visitant may be received, the conclusion is inevitable that the Heavenly Visitant must take His departure before food can again be received. But men cannot live without food, nor can they work without frequent food, so that the actual time in which there is no undigested food remaining is very short. Is it only during these periods that the Heavenly Visitant comes? What terrible difficulties even a slight deviation from the truth leads us into!

persons do? They change Sunday from a festival into a fast day, and would require others to do the same. They quote Tertullian and Augustine in behalf of fasting Communion; let them, therefore, listen to those doctors of the ancient Church. The one says that it is 'sinful' to fast on the Lord's day, and the other declares that it is 'a great scandal' to do so; and the ancient Church declared that if a person ventured to fast on the Lord's Day he ought to be excommunicated, and not allowed to come to the Lord's Table."[1]

It is somewhat difficult to see from whence those who advocate Fasting Communion get their example. They do not get it from the ancient Church; nor do they get it from the apostles, and still less do they get it from Christ. It probably originated in that age to which I have already referred, in which some earnest souls gradually perverted the truth, on the subject of the reverence due to the elements. At first they thought it was more honouring to the elements that they should not mix with other undigested food. Dr. Jacob mentions that "It was declared to be blasphemy, and an inspiration of the devil to say that the bread and wine received by a communicant passed through the same natural processes as other food." No wonder that the Church of that age lost its hold on the scientific men of the day, and had consequently to resort to the brute force of physical persecution, to keep its

[1] Triennial Addresses by the Bishop of Lincoln, 1882.

learned Galileos from publicly denouncing its scientific heresies.

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PART I.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOLY COMMUNION—EXCUSES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE CONSIDERED.

It may not be out of place to consider some of the various causes[1] which prompt people to absent themselves, when the invitation is given, "Draw near with faith and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort."

Some remain away, because they think it is a too solemn and awful thing to partake of what is called in the Prayer Book "holy mysteries." This doubtless arises from a superstitious view of the ordinance, and from not clearly understanding the meaning of the words "holy mysteries." They do not imply that there is anything mysterious about the institution, but merely that the bread and wine have a sacred meaning, and are therefore unlike ordinary food. It has often been pointed out that the letters

[1] I cannot refrain from recommending an admirable little tract, most suitable for distribution in a parish, called "The Gospel in the Lord's Supper," by the Rev. J. E. Sampson, which deals most ably and yet simply with the various excuses usually given.

of a book are mysteries to the uninitiated, but that does not argue that there is anything mysterious in the nature of letters. To those who are not taught of God the bread and wine are mysteries; but to those, however uneducated they are, who have been taught of the Holy Spirit, the bread and the wine are "pledges of His love" and "tokens of salvation." It is quite true that the ordinance is a most solemn one, but so are all God's ordinances. It is a solemn thing to preach the gospel, and an equally solemn thing, perhaps, to listen to it. Our salvation or our condemnation may be dependent on the way we hear it. It is a very solemn thing to partake of the Lord's Supper, but a very much more solemn thing not to partake of it. The late Bishop Wilberforce used to say that a person was no more justified in breaking one of God's commands than another, and yet many who would not infringe the command, "Thou shalt not steal," lived in habitual disregard of the command, "Do this in remembrance of Me." If we are not in a position to partake of it here below, we certainly shall not be in a position to partake of the marriage-feast above.

Some remain away because they do not feel "good enough," and fear therefore to partake "unworthily." It is a common excuse, "I am not sufficiently holy to warrant my becoming a communicant." At first sight this seems to arise from deep-seated humility, but, if we analyse it a little more closely, we shall find that it is the result of ignorance of

the nature of the ordinance. All true believers are invited; but then believers have no intrinsic holiness of their own. "Holy enough" they never will be. Christ said that He came to seek and save that which was *lost*. The self-righteous may *feel* worthy, but no truly humble child of God could do so. The poor humble believer is told that his feelings are not consulted in the matter. Enough for him that the same loving voice that once said to him, "Wash and be clean," said also, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

"According to Thy gracious word,
In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord,
I will remember Thee!

Gethsemane can I forget,
Or there Thy conflict see,
Thine agony and bloody sweat,
And not remember Thee?

Remember Thee and all Thy pains,
And all Thy love to me!
Yes, while a breath, a pulse remains,
Will I remember Thee!"

If those who say that they are not worthy mean that they have not yet accepted Christ as their Saviour, we would in all affection urge on them the importance of settling this question. Continuing to disobey the loving, pleading entreaties of Christ is not, however, the way to become worthy. Some speak as if they expected that in the course of a few years they might become more worthy than

they are at present. This is but a device of the Evil One, to make them delay in accepting the gracious offers of mercy. As each day, each year rolls on, more and more sins are added to that already long dark list. The only worthiness the Bible tells us of, is that which we obtain when God imputes to us the righteousness of Christ.

Those who do not feel "worthy enough," as they express it, often quote the text which St. Paul made use of to the Corinthians, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." But it must be evident, as is pointed out by the Rev. A. R. Faussett, that there is a great distinction between *unworthily communicating*, and *unworthiness in the person who communicates*. Some of the Corinthians deliberately violated the sacramental feast, and by "not discerning the Lord's body" treated it as a common meal, nay, worse than that, for some of them seem to have come to it in a state of intoxication (1 Cor. xi. 21).

The Rev. Armstrong Hall says—"But a careful study of the epistle, and the chapter before us, will show that very serious practices had arisen at Corinth. Persons came to the Lord's Supper as they did to a feast or an ordinary meal, hungry and thirsty, and ate and drank to excess; they failed to recognise that the bread and wine were symbols of the Lord's body and blood; and in utterly profaning the elements, they did grievous dishonour to the Person

and sacrifice of the Redeemer. The Corinthians were 'judged' and condemned by their own conduct, and God was obliged to punish some of the worst offenders with sickness, and even death, in order that the eyes of the Church might be opened to the enormity of their sin. *We may safely assert, that such excesses and gross dishonour are rendered impossible by the manner in which the Holy Communion is administered in the Church of England,* and St. Paul's words, as quoted in the exhortation, must be understood as a solemn warning to the Christless and mechanical worshipper, that he, who knowingly profanes God's holy things, and takes His name in vain, will not be held guiltless by Him, but sooner or later will reap a harvest in accordance with the seed which he has sown. The sin-burdened, pardon-seeking, Christ-desiring soul need have no fear; such the Father longs for, the Saviour welcomes, the Spirit invites: *unworthy* indeed in his own person, he cannot receive this Sacrament *unworthily*, for he is earnestly seeking to derive from it those blessings which his Lord desires to bestow."

To receive unworthily is very different from the unworthiness that each humble child of God must feel, the unworthiness that gives appropriateness to that beautiful prayer, "We do not presume to come to this Thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy table. But Thou art the

same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us."

Sometimes on entering a strange church, or even in one's own church at unexpected seasons, one sees the white cloth laid on the communion table, indicating that the Lord's Supper will be partaken of. The question is put by each one to himself, "Shall I remain?" Often the answer is, "I am not prepared," "I did not expect to communicate to-day, so I have not collected my thoughts," "I should not like to partake in an unprepared state," and so the child of God, at the close of the service, puts on his hat and joins the thoughtless throng who turn their backs on those pledges of a Saviour's love. Is this right? Can it be so? Does it ever occur to him that some day he may as unexpectedly be ushered into the presence of his God? Will unfaithful communicants be unprepared then? Not if they are God's children, washed in the precious blood of His only-begotten Son. They are children, though often disobedient ones.

But if prepared to be suddenly ushered into the presence of the King of kings, by what process of illogical reasoning do they consider, that they are not sufficiently prepared to unite with their fellow-crea-

tures in commemorating their Saviour's love in that holy ordinance? I am no advocate for thoughtlessly and heedlessly neglecting beforehand, to collect one's thoughts, when one knowingly is about to partake of the Lord's Supper. On the contrary, I think we are bound to reap as much benefit as possible from the institution, and the more we cultivate beforehand systematically everything that may tend to help our communion with God, the better and the greater will be the benefit we shall derive. But helpful as a course of self-examination, reading, and prayer beforehand may be, we must remember that these are by no means, absolutely, necessary. Some work up their feelings to the required pitch of feeling, if they do not actually say the words, "I am prepared." The truth conveyed in the lines,

> "All the fitness He requireth
> Is to feel your need of Him,"

is as true in this matter of coming to the Lord's Table, as it was in coming to Christ in the first instance as a poor lost soul.

One writer has said that "the truest preparation is a deep sense of the requirements and emptiness of the soul." Whether we have been able or not, previously to go through a course of preparation, if we unexpectedly find ourselves invited to the feast, let us not turn our backs upon it. There will be plenty of time, even in the shortest form of communion service in our Church, to gather up our thoughts and

concentrate them on that ever-welcome theme, "the old, old story of Jesus and His love." We may have come to church like the two disciples who journeyed towards Emmaus, not expecting any special blessing; we may leave it, saying to ourselves, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?"

"Too soon we rise; the symbols disappear:
The Feast, though not the Love, is passed and gone.
The bread and wine remove, but Thou art here—
Nearer than ever, still my Shield and Sun.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
Yet, passing points to the glad Feast above;
Giving sweet foretastes of the festal joy,
The Lamb's great bridal-feast of bliss and love."

Some there are who remain away from the Communion Table because some few who do go there are hypocrites. Of all the most illogical reasons brought forward by those who turn their backs on the Lord's Table, this one is perhaps the most unreasonable. In the first place, who are we that we should constitute ourselves the judges of the inner conscience of others? We must not forget that things which might be glaring inconsistencies in ourselves may, after all, be merely the fault of training in others. Such, after all, may be "weaker brethren," whom we are commanded to receive, and whom we may be able to help in spiritual things; if by no other way, at all events by a consistent example.

But supposing such are in reality what they appear to us to be, hypocrites; why should we deprive ourselves of the benefits of this sacred ordinance because of the faults of others? Our Lord must have known what was in the heart of Judas; but He treated him as He did the rest of the apostles, even to permitting him to partake of the Lord's Supper. Are we to deny ourselves the benefits of prayer and reading God's Word, because hypocrites follow our example? To every body of believers, doubtless, some few who are not real, will attach themselves for some reason or other. While fully recognising the necessity of guarding against the intrusion of unworthy members, we must bear in mind that it was of this dispensation our Saviour said, "Let both grow together till the harvest." A narrow, harsh spirit of judgment may be as injurious to the Church, as the lax, lenient want of discipline which permits of a low standard of morality. Because some come to the feast uninvited, surely those who are invited need not remain away. If we are to wait till all the evil in our midst has been eliminated, we shall have to wait till human nature is something very different from what it is.

I have no wish to go out of my way, to say a word against such an earnest, devoted body of Christians as that one known as the Brethren; but I cannot refrain from pointing out what terrible havoc they have made of Christian unity among themselves by this excessive judging of one another, before partaking

of the Lord's Supper. If we have erred on the one hand by being too lax in our Church, they have failed on the other hand, and have consequently lost their testimony as a united body. I once asked a minister if there were any Brethren in the town in which he lived. "Yes," he replied, "we have twenty of them divided into eighteen sects, who refuse to break bread with each other!" Doubtless this was an exaggeration, but it shows what he thought to be the prominent characteristic of that body, viz., that of internal divisions, which arise out of the abuse of private judgment. It would be well if all acted on the principle of endeavouring to see with whom they can unite, instead of ascertaining from whom they ought to separate. At the bottom of this spirit of judging too often there exists a self-righteous spirit which tells us that we are all right, and that it is only others who are in the wrong.

The "open and notorious evil liver" is to be warned not to presume to draw near; but beyond this a close and curious scrutiny into the inner life, and the motives which prompt some to attend, can never be advisable. The Church wisely accepts men on their own testimony, believing that they are what they profess to be, unless proved to the contrary. Any other action would lead to endless disputes and wranglings, which would not be to the edifying of the Church. If the best of us are but poor, unprofitable servants, with many faults and flaws in our conduct, need we be surprised at

the still greater faults and failings of others? We are all naturally prone to be tolerant of those faults which we are most prompted to, and to be equally intolerant of faults in others to which we are not tempted. This in itself is enough to warp our judgment concerning them; even when we are thoroughly cognisant of all the facts of the case. But how often human judgments and misunderstandings arise out of absolute ignorance of the real truth of the matter. We see men and things as they appear; but One eye alone sees them as they really are.

Some there are who remain absent from the Lord's Table because they fear that afterwards they might fall into open sin, and thus bring disgrace on the cause they prize so highly, and of which they consider themselves such unworthy adherents. This is a very different class from that just considered, and one which must claim the sympathy of every child of God who has ever felt the power of temptation.

Often those who are the holiest are the most oppressed at seasons, with a sense of their own weakness and unworthiness. But is that any reason why they should remain away? On the contrary many have found the sacred table to be the

> "Sweet resting-place of every heart
> That feels the plague of sin,
> Yet knows the deep mysterious joy
> Of peace with God within."

We call it Holy Communion, because there we

expect to hold sweet communion and fellowship with our risen Lord. We can trust Him to honour His own appointed ordinance, by His real spiritual presence in the heart of each true believer. That presence gives the weary pilgrim a strength he sorely needs. The presence of the Captain of our salvation, enables even the feeblest soldier to commence afresh the conflict with sin. To remain absent when the invitation goes forth to "draw near," is surely not the way to obtain the required strength. If the poor, weak soul says that he fears he will fall into sin, he may well be asked where then will he turn for strength? Remaining absent will not make him better. To such the apostle would say, "Christ alone is able to keep you from falling."

> "Come, seek your Lord, and ponder o'er His will,
> Come, drink the wine, and eat the broken bread,
> Meet emblems of the strength ye so much need."

The more we fear to fall, the more we feel our own weakness, the more need has each humble believer of this sacred ordinance. Stronger ones may be able to do without it; but for poor weak souls such as we are, we cannot, we dare not do without it. The love of some may be so real, so strong, that many waters cannot quench it; but our love is so weak and faint that we must carefully foster every means that fans the sacred flame.

PART I.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOLY COMMUNION—CONSIDERATION OF THE DIFFERENT NAMES APPLIED TO THE RITE.

As very frequently the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is spoken of under different names, it may be well to say a few words as to the meaning of the terms which are in general use.

The following names are often given to this sacred meal:—Sacrament—Holy Communion—The Lord's Supper, or the Feast—The Breaking of Bread—The Eucharist. Each of these terms expresses one or other of the different thoughts connected with the rite. The word sacrament means simply a solemn religious rite. Our Church defines it as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, *ordained by Christ Himself.*

The Bishop of Winchester says of it—"The word sacrament (*sacramentum*) is an ecclesiastical rather than a scriptural term. The original meaning of the word *sacramentum* was (1) anything sacred, hence (2) a sacred deposit, a pledge, and (3) most

commonly, an oath, especially the military oath, which soldiers took to be faithful to their country, and obey the orders of the General."

Though Baptism is as much a sacrament as the Lord's Supper, yet as a rule the term "the Sacrament" applies to the Lord's Supper rather than to Baptism. Doubtless the reason for this is, that Baptism being only an initiatory rite it is never repeated; while the Lord's Supper is so frequently celebrated, that it is always taken for granted in conversation that that particular sacrament is the one referred to.

The term "sacrament" itself denotes that it is something sacred; it calls forth devotional feelings of holy reverence. Dr. Horatius Bonar says of it:—"The service is a holy service; the table is a holy table; the symbols are holy symbols; He who provided it and presided at it is the Holy One, and they who partake are called 'holy brethren.' All here is sacred. It is 'holy ground,' in approaching which we are, like Moses, called to put off our shoes from off our feet."

The term "communion" brings before us the thought that in that sacred meal we have, in the *first* place, communion and fellowship with Christ our risen Lord. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16.) In the *second* place, we have the idea of fellowship one with another. Union is strength. The presence

of others gives confidence. Alone, each individual is but one of a mass of disintegrated units. The visible Church on earth, represented by the few who in each place partake together of the Lord's Supper, is to weak individuals what the oak is to the ivy. It gives support, and enables that which otherwise might be trampled under foot, to rise higher and higher. This communion and fellowship gives a cohesive force and power, to the individuals who make up the Church at large.

The term "Lord's Supper," or "Feast," speaks, *first*, of man's need, the craving want which things of this world can never satisfy; and, *secondly*, it speaks of the wonderful supply. Well might the apostle exclaim, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" The more we contemplate man's need, the more struck we must be with the wonderful supply with which Divine grace has met it. Yet strange as it may appear, there are some who see no beauty in Him who is "the chiefest among ten thousand" and "the altogether lovely." The feast is ready, the invitation has gone forth, all are invited; "Whoso is simple let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding, come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine that I have mingled" (Prov. ix. 4).

The expression "breaking bread," though it has no reference to the wine, embraces the two elements, and is doubtless used in the shortened form for the

sake of brevity. It teaches the double truth of "My body *broken* for you;" "My blood *shed* for you;" "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" "For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." The bread of which the apostle says we are all partakers is the same bread of which Christ said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The partaking of that one bread cements together the individuals, though many, in one body.

The term "Eucharist," which is derived from the Greek word *eucharistia*, signifying "thanksgiving," denotes the feelings of the communicants towards their Saviour. The children of Israel in celebrating the passover, looked back with feelings of gratitude to Him, who had led them forth out of the land of bondage. They had good cause to feel thankful, when they remembered the cruel taskmasters and the bitter bondage from which they had been released. But after all, their release was but from temporal evil, whereas the child of God has been released from a much more fatal bondage—the dominion of the Evil One. When the believer remembers the rock from which he was hewn and the pit from which he was digged, and contemplates the wonderful price paid for

that redemption, He has even more cause to be thankful.

In a snow-clad country, I remember hearing of the dead body of a poor woman being found, almost destitute of clothing, screening a little boy from the cold, chilling blasts. She had lost her way, and been overtaken in a snowstorm. Having wandered about for some time without food, and despairing of saving the life of her little one from the piercing cold, she put it in some comparatively sheltered place, wrapped her clothes around it, and then lay her own uncovered body in such a way as to shelter the child from the snow and cold wind, trusting that some one would find it alive and care for it. When that little one grew up and heard the tale of his mother's love, how dearly he would love her memory, and how joyfully would he do everything a grateful heart could suggest, to carry out any known wishes of that loving mother. Would not his thanksgiving in after years for the way his life was spared, ever be closely associated with memories of that beloved one whose life was lost in saving his?

This is but a faint illustration of the matchless love displayed by Him who died for us. When celebrating our Eucharistic feast of thanksgiving, what a powerful appeal is made to our love and gratitude, to live for Him who did so much for us; and with what shame it must be that we consider, how often we have turned aside from witness-

ing for Him, because of the little suffering or reproach that we may bring on ourselves.

"See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all."

The Eucharistic aspect of the feast is, however, purely a looking back. There is a still more important view of the case which is a looking forward. The apostle says, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till He come*" (1 Cor. xi. 26). It reminds the faithful communicant that it is but a little time and He will come again. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20), and the waiting Church responsively replies, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Nothing encourages the faithful soldier so much when inclined to grow weary of the conflict, as to be reminded that soon it will be over, soon he will be in the presence of the Captain of his salvation. There are seasons when even the best are tempted to take up with the things of the world which are very real, and sometimes very tempting. The Lord's Supper reminds the Church, and each individual member of it, that they are strangers and pilgrims. This is not their home; their Lord is

absent. He will return and take up each one to be for ever with Himself.

Besides the terrible conflict with indwelling and besetting sin, God's people are often a suffering people. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Heb. xii. 6.) Whether it is the empty chair in the family circle, telling of the blank so hard to be borne, or whether it is the public crushing disaster, or the still more trying secret sorrow, which like a canker is eating its way into the very heart of the individual, all denote the same thing, and are part and parcel of the discipline meant to fit us for the home above. But how painful in the meantime is it all! how hard to be borne! Then comes the sacred meal, reminding us that this life is not our only portion.

"When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above,
Seems the earth so poor and vast,
All our life-joy overcast?
Hush! be every murmur dumb:
It is only 'Till He come.'

Clouds and conflicts round us press;
Would we have one sorrow less?
All the sharpness of the cross,
All that tells the world is loss,
Death, and darkness, and the tomb
Only whisper 'Till He come.'

See, the Feast of Love is spread,
Drink the wine and eat the bread:
Sweet memorials—till the Lord
Call us round His heavenly board;
Some from earth, from glory some,
Severed only till He come."

PART II.

CHAPTER XV.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

PERHAPS there is no one thing that exhibits the contrariety of human nature so much as the way in which the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is observed. While some neglect it, and others, if they do not entirely neglect it, do not value its inestimable privileges, there exists a body, who exaggerate the importance of the rite, and treat it with a reverence which borders not only on the superstitious, but almost on the ridiculous. Having in Part I. referred to the former class, and shown the positive advantages of the institution, I will now endeavour to point out some of the abuses that, growing like parasites out of the sacred ordinance, have had their root in an exaggerated estimate of the efficacy of the divinely-appointed meal.

It may perhaps be said that this extreme is a fault on the right side, and that of the two evils it is the lesser. Be that as it may, the earnest student

of God's Word seeks for the truth as revealed by God, and wishes carefully to avoid either extreme. Because some have erred on one side, no reason exists why we should err on the other. The opposite of wrong in one direction, very frequently is wrong, only in another way. The truth does not lie in either extreme, but in that narrow path, that *via media*, which is so hard to attain, and which nothing but the teaching of God's Holy Word can guide us to, and enable us to walk in, when found.

Human nature is so constituted, that if one body of men adopt extreme views on a subject, the chances are that another body will set up a standard of opposition. Those who run into extremes, even when they do so with the very best intentions, run a great risk of producing a reactionary wave of public opinion, which does an incalculable amount of harm to the cause that is contended for. There may be a zeal for a cause that is "without knowledge." Who can doubt that the "idolatry to be abhorred of all men" so strongly denounced by our Prayer Book, produced that reaction which at one time was exhibited by the extreme section of the Puritan party? The very slovenliness, of which the Ritualistic party so justly complains, was undoubtedly produced in that reactionary wave that followed on the superstitious practices of the Church of Rome. Many earnest-minded Protestants, to this day, are so afraid of the reintroduction of Romish superstition into the worship of

their country, that they receive with great caution even comparatively harmless things, if they are introduced from that direction. Like the Trojans of old, who, of their own accord, introduced the wooden horse filled with the enemy, who were to open from within the gates of the city, to admit their fellows, our countrymen feel that they have already been once betrayed; and so every new device is regarded with grave suspicion.

The heresies and errors that have distressed the Church in all ages, have more generally arisen from the exaggeration of certain recognised truths, than from the introduction of absolutely new matter. Tennyson says—

"That a lie that is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight."

The Bishop of Liverpool has well pointed out, that the chemist who exaggerates the quantity of certain ingredients in a prescription, runs a great risk of poisoning his customer. The prescription may be a very good one, each ingredient may be most valuable in its due proportion to the other ingredients, but let the chemist upset the relationship, by increasing or decreasing any of the ingredients, and he may do an incalculable amount of harm. As in the science of medicine, so is it with theology. There are certain sacred truths revealed to us in the Word of God.

Some have reference to externals, others to internal, spiritual truths. As long as each one is received and acted upon rightly, so far they accomplish their purpose. But immediately one truth, or one set of truths, is exaggerated, the whole order is upset, and great mischief frequently follows.

It is customary to attribute the introduction of the sacerdotal element into the Christian Church to designing knaves, who had an object thereby to accomplish; and to cry down those who hold these extreme views as bad men. This is a theory that does not for one moment hold good. In the *first* place, most liberal-minded men will agree, that it is an extremely uncharitable view to take of the case. In the *second* place, it probably is a device of the Evil One to throw Christian people off their guard. If the less cautious are told that it is only bad men who introduce erroneous doctrine, they naturally are less suspicious of good men. But the student of the history of great religious movements, be they good or bad, true or false, cannot shut his eyes to the fact that, almost every error has had associated with it some sincere minds whose very earnestness and zeal were worthy of a better cause. It is possible that designing men have afterwards availed themselves of the sanction and support of good men, to bring about some purpose of their own. But as a rule it has been the pure in life, the earnest and the devoted who have taken the initiative, in introducing error into a Church, or into

any religious system. Good men are not always wise. Men of very kind, amiable dispositions are not always men of sound judgment, and no one is more ready to admit this than many of themselves. I know of one good man who stated, that such was the constitution of his mind, that he "seldom heard of a newfangled heresy that he did not see some good in it and feel inclined to nibble at it!"

The best of people can be very much led astray by their feelings. We read in Judges viii. 27 that Gideon "made an ephod" and "put it in his city, even in Ophrah; and all Israel went thither a-whoring after it, which thing became a snare unto Gideon and his house." Gideon was a good man and had done good service, but he was liable to err. Multitudes, who will not follow such men in their merits, will follow them in their errors. One false step of an otherwise exemplary individual is followed with most injurious results. Who can foresee the evil that may accrue from the influence of one good man when acting wrongly? The religious symbol may be set up for one generation merely to look at and admire. The succeeding generation regards it with veneration, and is followed by a generation that reverences it with a superstitious regard, which would have horrified the originator.

It is easy to see how excessive veneration brought about all the errors that have so divided

Christendom. Many earnest-minded men thought at first, to exalt the sacred institution of the Lord's Supper. Realising such great benefit themselves from the sacred ordinance, they believed that it was impossible to exaggerate the importance of it. Having elevated the ordinance itself to a position never intended for it by the Great Founder, they naturally attached a similar importance to the symbols of bread and wine, which were of course so closely associated with the spiritual blessings they had so often received. They were led on bit by bit, till they actually became guilty of adoring the material bread and wine. Having realised the presence of Christ in their souls, honouring His sacred feast, they gradually got to attach that presence to the elements of bread and wine, which originally were but mere symbols of it. The transition from this stage to that, in which the elements are supposed to possess an efficacy of themselves, quite independent of the state of mind of the worshipper, is too apparent to need pointing out.

It must also be borne in mind that, as in the case of Baptismal Regeneration already referred to, so heresies regarding Holy Communion were originated in an age when the unlawful art of magic was fully believed in and widely practised. True, the Church denounced magic, but the spirit of the age that produced it, could not fail to have an influence on the teaching of the Church. In an ignorant age, among the lower classes, there is at

the best of times, a very ill-defined line of demarcation drawn between true religion and mere superstition. Through the medium of nurses, servants, and employés of the lower classes, such superstitions have a tendency to spread upwards to the higher classes. What, then, could be more natural than to attribute to the bread and wine—at first only an outward and visible sign—an inherent power after it was handled by a priest, and a few words had been pronounced over it, capable of accomplishing most marvellous results? The bread and wine gradually acquired the position of a medicine or charm, which, when swallowed like the sacred pill of the Hindoos (made from the products of a cow, and blessed by a Brahmin), would have a beneficial result on the spiritual life of the recipient.

These superstitions gradually culminated in the doctrine of Transubstantiation, a term said to have been originally invented by Stephen, the Bishop of Augustodum, in the year 1100 A.D. The doctrine, however, was not defined till the Council of Lateran 1216 A.D. It cannot, however, be said to have been fully incorporated into the doctrines of the Church of Rome till 1551 A.D., at the Council of Trent, when the following words were added to their creed, "by consecration there is a conversion of the whole substance of the bread and wine into the substance of Christ's body and blood." Though some doubt seems to exist as to the exact time when the doctrine was accepted as a dogma, there can be

no doubt that the Council of Constance, 1415 A.D., condemned Wycliffe for denying it.

The denial of the cup to the laity was only the natural outcome of such an exaggeration. If the wine was actually the blood of Christ, it was expedient that the greatest care should be taken that none was spilt. In the course of many years there must have been many accidents in handing about the cup of wine. A liquid upset, cannot be recovered in the same easy way that a piece of bread can be picked up. Add to which, as Dean Stanley points out, the fact that the wine, which they believed was actually the blood of Christ, would adhere to the heavy moustaches of the warriors of the Middle Ages, and from thence would frequently drop off. Consequently, the custom grew up of the cup never being allowed to leave the hands of the priest, and the bread, before being given to each layman, had to be dipped in the wine by the priest. Even this, if not very carefully done, might lead to a drop falling off, so as a matter of expediency the Church decided that the laity were to be satisfied with the bread alone, while the priest only was to partake in both kinds. The Council of Constance, in 1415 A.D., first gave this decision, which was afterwards supported by the Council of Trent.

Up to the time of the Council of Trent, in spite of the corruptions of individuals, including many popes and many priests, the actual teaching of the Church of Rome was not so unsound. All her errors

had not been formulated into her dogmatic creeds. But from that time onwards she became a new heretical Church, having dissented from the good old paths of apostolic doctrine and primitive truths for those of newfangled heresies. She still proudly arrogates to herself the position of the old Church, and nominally she retains large numbers of people, but it is she who has gradually given up the teaching of an apostolic and primitive age. With the revival of learning that marked the sixteenth century, enlightened Christendom burst asunder the yoke of superstition, and went back to the teaching of the primitive Church. In sorrow Christendom witnesses that body which did not formulate its heresies till the Council of Trent, 1551 A.D., drift further and further away from the source of all truth, the teaching of God's holy Word, because she has lost her first love.

The Bishop of Winchester thus defines the doctrine of Transubstantiation: "In the Eucharist, after the words of consecration, the whole substance of the bread is converted into the substance of the Body of Christ, and the substance of the wine into the substance of His blood: so that the bread and wine no longer remain, but the Body and Blood of Christ are substituted in their place." He says, "The doctrine of the early ages was not in favour of a miraculous change in the consecrated elements, not in favour of a carnal presence of the natural body of the Lord, but in favour of a real,

effectual, life-giving presence of Christ's spiritual body communicated to the faithful, and feeding the souls of His disciples." The same writer says: "But one thing is certain, viz., that the doctrine of a carnal Presence was never the ruled doctrine of the primitive ages, was not received, or rather was emphatically denied, by many of the greatest fathers, and that it does not come down to us with the sanction and authority of that which was always, everywhere, and by all men, anciently acknowledged (*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus traditum est*)."

Bishop Jewell says on the subject: "If any learned man of all our adversaries, or if all the learned men that be alive, be able to bring one sufficient sentence out of any old Catholic doctrine or father, or out of any old General Council, or out of the Holy Scriptures of God, or any example of the Primitive Church, whereby it may be clearly and plainly proved that for the space of six hundred years after Christ . . . the people were then taught to believe that Christ's body is really or substantially in the Sacrament, or that His body is, or may be, in a thousand places, or more, at one time, . . . I promised then that I would give over and subscribe unto him; . . . but I am well assured that they shall never be able truly to allege one sentence; and because I know it, therefore I speak it, lest ye haply should be deceived." (Bishop Jewell, Works, vol. i. pp. 20–22.)

Were it not such a solemn subject, it would be amusing to a man of ordinary intelligence, to know of all the different ideas that grew out of this one error of Transubstantiation. Dr. Jacob, in a book that deserves to be widely read, called "The Lord's Supper Historically Considered," tells us that to carry a piece of "reserved" bread about one's person was considered an unfailing protection from danger by land or sea; and that a morsel of it dropped into the mouth of the dying was believed to be a sure viaticum for the soul. The same writer mentions a story told by Rupert of Duytz, that "in a conflagration which destroyed a part of that town, a 'corporal' taken from a church and thrown into the raging fire, was cast back by the flames unconsumed and uninjured; and a pyx containing the 'Lord's body,' remained whole and unscorched, while another pyx, with unconsecrated bread and other vessels, was destroyed."

There is no use pointing out that the whole thing was opposed to common-sense and reason, for as one writer has remarked, "The more absurd it is the more room there is for faith;" and hence some have been even thankful for having its absurdity proved, for then they have agreed, "It will be the more meritorious for us to believe it." Even learned men in the twelfth century, Dr. Jacob says, used calmly to discuss such questions as what a mouse eats, when the sacramental bread is eaten by it!

Carlyle, in describing the death of Louis XV. of France, gives a brief insight into the degenerate working of the doctrine of Transubstantiation: "For His Majesty has religious faith; believes at least in a devil . . . Pompadour (the king's mistress) had to pack and be in readiness, yet did not go . . . Rigorous Christophe de Beaumont (archbishop), who has spent his life in persecuting hysterical Jansenists and incredulous Nonconfessors, or even their dead bodies if no better might be, how shall he now open heaven's gate, and give absolution with the *corpus delicti* (the royal mistress) under his nose? Symbols of the holiest have become gambling dice of the basest. Louis meanwhile is in considerable impatience for his Sacrament; sends more than once to the window to see whether they are not coming. Be of good comfort, Louis, what comfort thou canst; they are under way, these Sacraments. Towards six in the morning they arrive. The Cardinal is here in pontificals, with his pyxes and his tools; he approaches the royal pillow; elevates his wafer; mutters or seems to mutter somewhat; and so, as the Abbé Georgel, in words that stick to one, expresses it, has 'made the amende honorable to God!'"

Professor Candlish, in speaking of the way in which God works in the human heart, says—"The Spirit uses means, and deals with us as intelligent and voluntary creatures, not moving us by mere supernatural power working as by magic

without any exercise of our minds and wills, but by enlightening our understandings by the discovery of the truth, awakening our conscience by convictions of sin and duty, and moving our wills by appropriate motives and persuasions."

The theory, however, contained in the doctrine of Transubstantiation is exactly the reverse of all this. The mind and the understanding of the communicant have extremely little to do in the matter. Indeed, after the first exercise of the will of the communicant in the act of coming to communion, the will of the priest is far more potent than that of the recipient. The communicant merely becomes the passive recipient of a piece of bread and a sip of wine (if, indeed, this latter element is not refused altogether), but the priest alone has the power of converting that bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Christ. The qualifications of the priest are of far more importance than those of the communicant. In the first place, unless the priest has been ordained by a bishop, who has in his turn been ordained by others, who can trace their pedigree back to the time of Peter, the whole ceremony is a farce. How is a poor ignorant soul to ascertain this fact to start with? A still greater difficulty, however, presents itself in what is know as the *intention* of the priest. That is to say, the priest may ostensibly perform the service, but unless he wills to perform this great miracle of turning bread and wine into flesh and blood, the change does not take place. Even admitting that

the intending communicant has ascertained that the successional chain of laying on of hands, from the time of Peter to his own time, is complete, and that the particular priest about to officiate has been lawfully ordained, how is he to ascertain the condition of the mind of the priest? This he never can do, so that in theory the intending communicant never knows whether or not he has actually communicated.

Considering how utterly repugnant such a doctrine is to the whole teaching of God's Word, one would naturally suppose that there were at all events a good many passages of Scripture, even if misunderstood ones, to support a theory so utterly opposed to common sense, and so contrary to the enlightened views of the nineteenth century. But when one hears all that has to be advanced, even by the supporters of the doctrine, one is struck not only at the strange misunderstanding of the passages referred to, but also at the extremely few passages that its advocates actually bring from Scripture. As a rule, the only two passages referred to are those in John vi. 51 and Matt. xxvi. 27. The first of these comes just after a miracle our Saviour had wrought, in feeding about five thousand men with five barley loaves and two small fishes. Our Saviour spoke to the assembled multitude about the bread which perisheth not, and from that went on to speak of the heavenly manna which was sent down from heaven to feed their ancestors in the wilderness. When they said, "Lord, evermore give us this bread," He replied, "I am the bread of

life." When the Jews then murmured at Him because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven," and suggested that He was only a carpenter's Son, He repeated the assertion, "I am the bread of life;" and then, to show them that His words had a spiritual signification, He added, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The Jews, however, did not understand Him. While He spake of the spiritual participation in His death represented by flesh and blood, their thoughts dwelt on the gross and carnal. "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" "Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him."

This passage is a very remarkable one, and has led to an enormous amount of controversy. There is no actual reference to Holy Communion, but it is of course just possible that our Saviour had that sacred institution in view. That does not affect the

question. The whole passage doubtless refers to the great mission of Christ on earth, and prophetically foretells His approaching death. The Son of God, incarnate in human form and dying for sinful man, is represented by flesh and blood. The eating and drinking that flesh and blood are but figures to denote the spiritual participation in the death of Christ, which alone can give spiritual life, or sustain it when obtained. "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). To dwell merely on the actual eating and drinking, even if there was any distant reference to the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which had not then been even instituted, is to miss the point of the whole thing. Our Saviour's object was, as far as we can judge, to raise up man's thoughts from the mere material food, which only satisfies the physical wants, to the higher spiritual craving which could never be satisfied, but by the bread of life, which was Christ Himself.

The only other passage often referred to is in Matt. xxvi. 27, when our Saviour was instituting the original Lord's Supper. The words He made use of are, "This is My body," and, "This is My blood." He was then appointing the bread and wine as symbols to represent His body and blood.

If, however, these words are to be taken literally, the same rigid law of interpretation would demand that similar expressions should also be taken lite-

rally, which, one ventures to think, would startle even the most extreme exponents of this theory. To take a few from among a large number: "The seed *is* the word," "The good seed *are* the children of the kingdom," "The tares *are* the children of the wicked one," "The field *is* the world," "The reapers *are* the angels," "The harvest *is* the end of the world," "I *am* the door," "I *am* the true vine," "The seven good kine *are* seven years," "The seven good ears *are* seven years," "Thou *art* this head of gold," and many other passages throughout both Old and New Testaments. Unless a person has a special cause to plead for, one would venture to think that a man of average intellect would be bound to admit that this style of language was meant to convey the idea to our minds that one thing *represented* another. Thus, "the tares *are* the children of the wicked one" is only another way of stating the fact that the children of the wicked one are *represented* by the tares. It almost seems too obvious to require explanation to point out that when our Saviour said, "This *is* My body," that He meant, "This *represents* My body." It must further be remembered that when our Saviour made use of these words the great sacrifice on Calvary had not taken place, so that He was still in the flesh. The bread and wine could not actually be the body and blood, which were then alive, though they might reasonably represent it.

It is useless to multiply quotations to show what were the views of the Fathers of the Reformation on

the subject, and what views were actually adopted by our Church. Suffice it to say that in Article xxviii., the Church of England speaks out plainly when it says—"Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Lord) cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions. The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith."

PART II.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONSUBSTANTIATION.

At the time of the Reformation, when the doctrine of Transubstantiation was rejected by the more enlightened and better educated people, a great controversy arose on two points, viz., the nature of Christ's presence in the Sacrament, and the efficacy of the ordinance. It was not unnatural that such should be the case. In reading over Rom. xiv., in which the apostle deals with a different subject, one cannot but be struck with the diversity of opinion that the apostle seems to think should be tolerated in the Christian Church of that age, on a matter by no means of trifling importance. "Let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him." That a certain amount of difference of opinion should exist, and should be permitted within the boundaries of the Church, seems only natural and quite in accordance with that diversity that will exist in all human institutions. The only

question for the Church to consider is, where to draw the line, so as to prevent a very proper religious reverence degenerating into a superstitious, idolatrous regard on the one hand, or a latitudinarian indifference on the other.

It must also be remembered, that those who came out of the superstitions of Rome, had during a whole lifetime been imbibing erroneous teaching, and consequently might not be so well fitted as we are calmly to review the whole question, carefully weighing the pros and cons. One party would naturally be as tolerant of the teaching of their venerated mother Church—who was only gradually drifting off into error—as possible. Another party would—seeing all the evil of a corrupt system—as naturally be opposed to anything that seemed to favour the errors out of which, at a great sacrifice to themselves, they were emerging. The one would like to reject as little as possible, while the other would like to reject as much as possible of the old system.

The two parties that formed immediately, were under the leadership of Luther on the one hand, and Zwingle on the other. Both these were earnest, devoted men, and both had many equally earnest, devoted followers. Both were agreed in rejecting the superstitious, magical theory of Transubstantiation. Luther represented the party that clung to the traditions of the past, while Zwingle represented that party which, seeing around them the fearful corrup-

tions of Rome, wished to avoid every taint of error, and to cut themselves as free from the past, as possible.

Luther, while rejecting the doctrine that the bread and wine were actually converted into the flesh and blood of our Saviour, by a few words pronounced by a priest, could not entirely get away from the old teaching. He could not help associating the presence of Christ with the actual bread and wine, and though he quite saw the absurdity of maintaining that the bread and wine were flesh and blood, he maintained that a spiritual presence of Christ, as opposed to a gross material one, was connected with the elements. His teaching is called that of Consubstantiation, which the Bishop of Winchester thus defines:—"*Consubstantiation* does not imply a change in the substance of the elements. Those who hold this doctrine, teach that the bread remains bread, and the wine remains wine; but that with and by means of the consecrated elements, the true, natural body and blood of Christ are communicated to the recipients." There can be no doubt that these views of Luther were a very great advance on the magical theory which he had been taught as a monk.

The party led by Zwingle thought, however, that these views were, though a great improvement, still too closely allied to the superstitions of the past, besides being very mystical. Some say that Zwingle advocated the idea that this Sacrament was only a bare commemoration of the death of Christ, and the elements were merely symbols to remind us of His

body and blood, and that the Lord's Supper was only a sign left behind for the bride, the Church, by the Heavenly Bridegroom, who had departed.

Dr. Jacob, however, says—"The doctrine of Zwingle has often been misrepresented, as if he denied that the Lord's Supper was in any sense a means of grace or a participation in Christ's body and blood. But his own writings afford a sufficient answer to such misrepresentations. Thus in his 'Confession of Faith,' addressed to the Emperor Charles V., he says, 'I believe that a Sacrament is a visible figure or form of invisible grace, produced and given by the gift of God. I believe that in the sacred Supper of the Eucharist the true body of Christ is present to the contemplation of faith: *i.e.*, that those who give thanks to God for so great a benefit conferred on us of His kindness in His Son, recognise that He took to Him true flesh, suffered truly in it, and truly washed away our sins with His own blood; and therefore that work done by Christ is, as it were, made present to them by the contemplation of faith. But that Christ's body in its essence and reality (*i.e.*, His natural body itself) is either present in the Supper, or is eaten by our mouth and teeth, we truly not only deny, but firmly maintain that it is an error adverse to God's Word.'"

Dean Stanley says of Zwingle—"One only, the reformer of Zurich, the clear-headed and intrepid Zwingle, in treating of this subject, anticipated the necessary conclusion of the whole matter. But his

doctrine prevailed in England and on the Continent wherever his influence extended, and in the Roman Church has not been altogether inoperative. In language perhaps too austerely exact, but transparently clear, he recognised the full biblical truth, that the operations of the Divine Spirit on the soul can only be through moral means; and that the moral influence of the Sacrament is, chiefly or solely through the potency of its unique commemoration, of the most touching and transcendent event in history."

"No doubt controversy often produces extremes, and leaders of parties are apt to say what in their calmer moments they would not sanction. Luther lived long enough to consider well his views, but Zwingle was killed in action at the age of 47, and consequently, as in the case of most young reformers who are cut off before their work, humanly speaking, is completed, his reputation has suffered considerably at the hands of his enemies, and even from those who admired the man, but who did not understand him. Had a man of such marked ability been spared, he might have left a different impression on Christendom."

> "The saddest of all sad thoughts, I ween,
> Is the one sad thought what might have been."

The Bishop of Winchester tells us that a third party arose, as is usually the case when extreme views are being advocated, who embraced what was good in both. This party was represented

by Calvin, who attributed a direct spiritual blessing to the Lord's Supper. While accepting the doctrine of the real Presence, he utterly rejected the idea that the Presence was in any way connected with the bread and wine, maintaining that it was in the heart of the believer. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20). He recognised the "in memoriam" views of Zwingle's party, but considered that the Lord's Supper had still a deeper meaning.

> "In the bread which here is broken,
> In the wine no empty token
> Of an absent Lord we see."

If our Lord had promised His presence, wherever two or three real believers were gathered together in His name, he assumed that He would not be less really present with them in the Lord's Supper, and that as it was His own appointed place of meeting, and means of holding fellowship and communion with His people, they had every right, provided they received it rightly, that is, with believing hearts, to expect much benefit from communion with their risen Lord. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16). The margin of the Revised Version puts it even stronger—"Is it not a participation?" etc.

The Bishop of Winchester says,[1] that since the time when Luther and Zwingle so hotly contested the points at issue, there has been a considerable modification of both extremes, and that the great bulk of Protestants hold views varying very slightly, if at all, from the intermediate views advocated by Calvin, accepted by Archbishop Cranmer, and finally incorporated into the Prayer Book of the Church of England. That there are still extreme Lutherans, and equally extreme Zwinglians, cannot be denied; but their numbers form a small percentage when speaking of Protestantism as a whole.

The nature of the presence of Christ, according to the teaching of the Church of England, and, indeed, more or less of all sound Protestant Churches, is, that it is a *spiritual* presence in the hearts of true believers. Archbishop Cranmer says—"This word sacrament I do sometimes use for the sacramental bread, water, and wine. . . . And some-

[1] After Luther's death Melancthon (the disciple, friend, and successor of Luther) had the chief voice and influence among the Lutherans; and through his peaceful counsels in Germany, and Calvin's sound views in Switzerland, much greater concord prevailed on this question among the Continental Protestants than had existed during the lifetime of the great Reformer of Wittenberg, the Lutherans and Zwinglians both consenting to modify their views and statements. Insomuch that Hooker observed concerning them: "By opening the several opinions which have been held, they are grown, for aught I can see on all sides, at the length to a general agreement concerning that which alone is material, namely, the real participation of Christ, and of life in His body and blood by means of this sacrament."—*Bishop of Winchester on Thirty-nine Articles.*

times, by this word sacrament, I mean the whole ministration and receiving of the Sacraments, either of Baptism or of the Lord's Supper; and so the old writers many times do say that Christ and the Holy Ghost be present in the Sacraments,—not meaning by that manner of speech that Christ and the Holy Ghost be present in the water, bread, or wine (which be only the outward visible Sacraments), but that in due ministration of the Sacraments, according to Christ's ordinance and institution, Christ and His Holy Spirit be truly and indeed present by their mighty and sanctifying power, virtue, and grace, in all them that worthily receive the same." And again — "Although Christ, in His human nature, substantially, really, corporeally, naturally, and sensibly be present with His Father in heaven, yet sacramentally *and spiritually He is here present.* For in water, bread, and wine He is present, as in signs and sacraments; but He is indeed spiritually in those faithful Christian people which, according to Christ's ordinance, be baptized, or receive the Holy Communion, or unfeignedly believe in Him." [1]

Perhaps no better illustration conveys the meaning of this presence than the one that Archbishop Cranmer made use of. The sun is *locally* in the firmament, and yet we say, "We have the sun in this room every morning," thereby meaning

[1] Quoted in "The Christian Ordinances in their Scriptural Simplicity," by the Rev. A. H. Synge.

that the rays of the sun have been shining in the room and warming it. In the same way the Sun of Righteousness is in heaven. "He is not here, He is risen," but the rays of His divine grace are "verily and indeed" present wherever two or three are gathered together.

PART II.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOLY COMMUNION—MODERN RITUALISM.

DURING the last half-century a party have arisen within the Church, who are not satisfied with the distinctly spiritual aspect of Holy Communion. They are by no means agreed among themselves as to the exact nature of the Divine Presence in the Sacrament; but they are agreed in being dissatisfied with the teaching of the Prayer Book on the subject. It is a little difficult to get an exact definition of their teaching, for the same reason that it is so hard to obtain clearly-defined statements of the views of the opposite school, the Plymouth Brethren. Neither extreme have ever banded themselves together by creeds, capable of legal interpretation. The Wesleyans, Irvingites, and others who have left the English Church, have drawn up articles of agreement among themselves, and consequently no

difficulty exists in ascertaining their views, as a corporate institution. With the Plymouth Brethren and the Ritualists, as neither of them form a corporate institution, each individual is at liberty to reject the views of any book, newspaper, or of the leaders of his party. One therefore feels bound to speak a little cautiously, lest one should be unintentionally doing them an injustice, by accrediting them with sentiments which only a few of their number hold. I have before me a large number of extracts from books, speeches, sermons, &c., showing the views of this party generally; the difficulty is to select those which can most fairly be said to be the general views of this party. I feel that, perhaps, I cannot do better than follow the Rev. W. Odom [1] in the extracts he has given from those books which are in current use among them, and from those writers who may fairly be said to be representative men.

In the "Anglican Directory" we read—"He who does not keep the Sacrament well, so that a mouse or other animal devour it, he must do penance forty days. But whoever hath lost it, or a part thereof hath fallen and cannot be found, he must do penance thirty days.

"But if the chalice have dropped upon the altar, the drop must be sucked up, and the priest must do penance for three days. If the drop of blood have penetrated to the fourth cloth, he must do penance

[1] "The Church of England, her Principles, Ministry, and Sacraments." By the Rev. W. Odom.

for twenty days, and the priest or the deacon must wash the linen coverings which the drop has touched three times over a chalice, and the ablution is to be reserved with the relics. Also, if any one by any accident of the throat vomit up the Eucharist, the vomit ought to be burned, and the ashes ought to be reserved near the altar.

"If the Eucharist hath fallen to the ground, the place where it lay must be scraped, and fire kindled thereon, and the ashes reserved beside the altar. Also, if by negligence any of the blood be spilled upon a table fixed to the floor, the priest must take up the drop with his tongue, and the place of the table must be scraped, and the shavings burnt with fire, and the ashes reserved with the relics beside the altar, and he to whom this has befallen must do penance forty days.

"If a fly or spider, or any such thing, should fall into the chalice . . . after the consecration, the fly or spider, or such like thing, should be warily taken, oftentimes diligently washed between the fingers, and should then be burnt, and with the ablution, together with the burnt ashes, must be put in the piscina."

"The English Catholic's Vade Mecum" (Ritualistic) gives the following as an act of faith:—"I most firmly believe that in this Holy Sacrament Thou art present verily and indeed; that here are Thy body and blood, Thy soul and Thy Godhead" (p. 37).

In the "Little Prayer Book" (Ritualistic) is this

direction:—"At the words, This is my body, this is my blood, you must believe that the bread and wine become the real body and blood, with the soul and Godhead of Jesus Christ. Bow down your head and body in deepest adoration when the priest says these awful words, and worship your Saviour then verily and indeed present on His altar" (p. 18).

The Rev. Dr. Littledale writes—"In the Holy Communion, after consecration, the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are that same body and blood which were conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and ascended into heaven."

The Vicar of St. Matthew's, Sheffield, says—"I wish to point out simply and clearly what the doctrine of the Real Presence is. It is simply this; the body and blood of Jesus Christ are verily and indeed present in the forms of bread and wine; after the consecration the bread and wine become really and truly the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour; it is the same body which was born of the blessed Virgin Mary; the same precious body which died for us on the Cross, and the same precious blood which was shed for us."

The Rev. A. L. Livingstone, in an address to the Ward of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, made the two following statements:—

"When we say that the Presence of Christ is *objective*, we understand that it is there without communion as with communion, abiding under the

outward and visible form *in the consecrated elements*, so long as the consecrated Elements are unconsumed. Again, we say that the Presence of Christ is *whole*. *Whole* Christ comes to us, and is incorporated with us, in His Sacrament. His body, His blood, His soul, His divinity, are present. And not only that, but *He is wholly present in every particle, just as much as in all that is consecrated.*"

"When we separate from the notion of substance everything gross and material, *we may regard the term* TRANSUBSTANTIATION *as a convenient definition of the results of consecration* which the Articles do not exclude. . . . But those who *rightly* maintain the term Transubstantiation understand it to signify that what is in outward *accidents*—in sight, taste, and touch—bread and wine, by consecration becomes, not in *accidents* but in *substance*, the body and blood of Christ."

The late Dr. Pusey wrote—"The Church of England taught, not an undefined, but a Real Objective Presence of Christ's blessed body and blood. . . . We receive in the Eucharist, not only the flesh and blood of Christ, but Christ Himself, both God and man."

The Rev. W. J. E. Bennett, Vicar of Frome, said—"Is the Church of Rome the only Communion in which man may hold the doctrines of the Real Presence and the Eucharistic Sacrifice? The real, actual, and visible presence of our Lord upon the altars of our Church. . . . Who myself adore, and teach the

people to adore, the consecrated elements, believing Christ to be in them."

The Rev. A. H. Mackonochie wrote—"I believe that by the power of this consecration, and by the continual presence which He has promised with His priests, He does now, as in heaven and on earth (here as there, although under earthly veils, Himself both priest and victim), offer in each Eucharist the same one all-sufficient sacrifice."

I must not weary my reader with more quotations. Enough has been said to show that this new party hold a very great deal more than is taught by the Church of England. Speaking of them as a whole, allowing for a few exceptions who are not quite so advanced as the others, it must be admitted that they associate the Divine Presence with the mere material bread and wine in contradistinction to the presence of Christ in the heart of the believer, which is the doctrine taught in the Prayer Book, and held by the whole of the Church of England since the Reformation, being advocated by such able men as Hooker. The Rubric at the end of the Communion Service, in its apology for adopting the attitude of kneeling for the recipient, says —"It is hereby declared that no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread or wine there bodily received, or unto any Corporal Presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For the sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances, and there-

fore may not be adored (for that were idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians)."

The Bishop of Winchester says—"The doctrine of a real, spiritual Presence, is the doctrine of the English Church, and was the docrine of Calvin and of many foreign Reformers. It teaches that Christ is really received by faithful communicants in the Lord's Supper; but that there is no gross or carnal, but only a spiritual and heavenly presence there: not the less real, however, for being spiritual. It teaches, therefore, that the bread and wine are received naturally, but the body and blood of Christ are received spiritually. . . . Christ does as really nourish and sanctify the soul as the elements the body." Hooker says—"The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not to be sought for in the Sacrament (*i.e.* in the elements), but in the worthy receiver of the Sacrament."

Much as we may sympathise with the individual who seeks to reverence His Saviour, a limit must be drawn by the Church at that point, where simple reverence ceases and idolatry begins. The presence of Christ in the heart is one thing; the presence of Christ in the bread and wine is another. Directly the worshipper associates the presence of his God with a mere external symbol, whether it be the Christian with a piece of bread, or whether it be the Hindoo with a lump of Ganges clay, the elementary principle of idolatry has been admitted. The further development of the error is a mere matter of detail. The

student of history must know that this is purely a question of time.

It is most remarkable how many systems of false worship, associate the presence of the founder with their religion. Christianity produces a striking contrast, as Dean Stanley ably points out. He says—"In other religions, the continuance of such a presence of the founder is a sufficiently familiar idea. In Buddhism the lama is supposed still, to be an incarnation of the historical Buddha. In Hinduism, Vishnu was supposed to be from time to time, incarnate in particular persons. In the Greek and Roman worship, though doubtless with more confusion of thought, the divinities were believed to reside in the particular statues erected to their honour; and the cells or shrines of the temples in which such statues were erected were regarded as the 'habitations of the god.' In Judaism, although here again with many protestations and qualifications, the 'Shechinah,' or glory of Jehovah, was believed to have resided, at any rate till the destruction of the ark, within the innermost sanctuary of the temple. But in Christianity the very reverse of all this was involved, in the very essence of the religion. 'It is expedient for you that I go away. If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.'"

Without wishing to take a narrow view of the question, it does almost seem as if this new party advocated stronger views than the Roman Catholics themselves. Archbishop Gardiner, who was instru-

mental in burning Archbishop Cranmer, states that the following was the teaching of Rome:—"The Catholic teaching is, that the manner of Christ's presence in the Sacrament is spiritual and supernatural; not corporal, not carnal, not natural, not sensible, not perceptible, but only spiritual, the how and manner whereof God knoweth." If, however, we compare this statement with some of the foregoing ones already mentioned, it would almost appear, as if the views of the two Archbishops of the Church of Rome and the Church of England, were considerably more closely allied than the teaching of Archbishop Cranmer and that of some of his professed followers!

The Dean of Peterborough, in a very able pamphlet on the subject, says—"I do not believe that there is any presence of Christ in or under the forms of bread and wine. The presence is a presence to faith, a presence not in the hand but in the heart of him who receives. And I can conceive of only two kinds of presence: a literal presence or a figurative presence; a presence to sense, to sight, to touch, which is a corporal presence, or a presence to the mind and heart, which is a spiritual presence. Between these two I know of none. The term *Real Presence* is a comparatively modern term. It is not found as applied to the Eucharist in any ancient father. The earliest known instance of its occurrence is not earlier than the time of the Reformation. It occurs in a letter addressed by the Hussites in Bohemia to Ladislaus, in which they maintain that

'the words of our Saviour Jesus Christ said nothing of the Real Presence.' Obviously they must have been referring to it as a term at that time employed by their adversaries in the Church of Rome. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, had indeed spoken of a Real Presence of our Lord dwelling in heaven, but of any Real Presence in or with the bread and wine no trace, I believe, has been found before the sixteenth century. I do not say that this necessarily proves that the expression is wrong or false. It is conceivable that a phrase may be of comparatively late invention, and yet aptly express a truth which has long been acknowledged. The truth may be there, the doctrine may be taught, before the word has been found which shall give it most convenient expression; just as the doctrine of the Trinity was taught and recognised though the word Trinity dates only from the close of the second century after Christ. Still the extremely later occurrence of the term in this instance, would seem to show that the doctrine which it denotes was not a doctrine generally received, and at least justifies us in demanding that a clear and satisfactory explanation be given of it, and that it be shown to be a proper and adequate expression of a generally-received truth.

"And this I believe to be the doctrine of the Church of England. Happily, although many of the great divines of the Church of England have used the term *Real Presence*, our Church has avoided it. It does not occur in her Articles, her Com-

munion Service, or her Catechism. Those of our divines who have used it, have done so with the desire, on the one hand, to show that the Church of England looks for and receives all that the Church of Rome professes to give, though in a different and undefined manner, leaving it a mystery to be embraced by faith and not too curiously explained; and, on the other hand, to show that our Church has no sympathy with those who see only a bare sign in the Sacraments. But the term is not found in her authorised documents, and according to any view it is quite unnecessary. Where Christ is present, He is really present; where His body and blood are present, they are really present; *the adjective 'real' is superfluous.*

"But here is an attempt to conceive of the spiritual, as held in and presented under material forms; and it is this which has been so pernicious; it is this which has led to such gross coarse material views of the Sacrament; it is this which has led to the reservation of the Sacrament, as if in some way Christ Himself were inseparably attached to the consecrated elements; it is this which has led to the notion that Christ present in the elements is in them to be adored; it is this which has led to that most ensnaring and delusive doctrine of fasting communion, a doctrine which strikes at the very root of faith, a doctrine according to which Christ the King of glory is believed actually to enter with the bread and wine into our bodies, which are supposed to be

the more pure and clean for the reception of the Heavenly Guest, because we have not suffered food to pass our mouths, and this in direct defiance of the plain words of our Blessed Lord, 'That which entereth into a man defileth not a man.'"

In secular things, it is not difficult to conceive of a case in which a client might be informed by his lawyer of the existence of a flaw in some legal document of which he might avail himself to defeat the obvious intention of the document. A man of honour would, however, reject with scorn such an idea; and even one devoid of honour might be disinclined to act on such a suggestion, for fear of arousing the indignation of public opinion. The obvious intention of the Reformers was undoubtedly to reject entirely the superstitious, erroneous teaching of the Church of Rome. The whole of the Articles, of the Prayer Book, of the Canons and Homilies seem to be devoted to this one object. It would, however, be passing strange if the sharp-witted ecclesiastical lawyers of the nineteenth century, were unable to point out certain flaws in documents drawn up by the lawyers of former centuries, by which the spirit of the originals might to a very great extent be evaded. When one reads of an ecclesiastical lawyer, who could advise his Bishop to refuse permission for a Wesleyan minister to insert on the tombstone of his daughter the prefix, "Reverend," denoting that her father was a minister; and thus let the bishop into a long case of litigation in which

not only the principle contended for was lost, but many thousand pounds besides, one can understand how even lawyers can be affected by party bias. That such lawyers, impelled by strong sectarian views, could not discover flaws here and there, would indeed be marvellous.

I have seen enough of the various systems of religion throughout our vast empire, containing Mohammedans, Hindoos, Buddhists, Fire-worshippers, Devil-worshippers, Fetish-worshippers, to cease to wonder at the mere abstract existence of strange doctrines. Indeed one need hardly leave Christendom to see, that the strangest ideas of religion can exist, even under the form of Christianity, among Shakers, Peculiar People, Mormons, Latter-Day Saints, *et hoc omne genus.* In face of such an experience it would indeed be folly to deny, that not only strange doctrines may exist, but that they can coexist in bodies of men showing the deepest earnestness and devotion to what they believe to be truth. How often one sees a spirit of earnestness that is only worthy of a better cause to approach perfection; and how often in contemplating it one feels terribly reproached for one's own lack of devotion to a cause, that claims to be from Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

The general rule, however, is that each body of earnest worshippers, holding distinctive views, separate themselves entirely from those who do not agree with them, and glory in having not only dis-

tinctive teaching, but a name that denotes that such is the case. For instance, the Irvingites of the present day teach exactly the same doctrines—with one exception, viz. that of Apostolical Succession—as are propounded by our Ritualists. Not finding a congenial atmosphere in either the Episcopalian or Presbyterian Churches, they have become a distinct sect. To abuse them would be the height of intolerance. In an empire such as ours, which is a kind of Pantheon, one must learn to live and let live. Men must be allowed to believe and propound anything they like without molestation. If such tolerant principles were not practised, our vast empire would be ever witnessing internal, religious civil wars. Each one is at liberty to propound what he thinks right, always allowing the same liberty to those with whom he comes in contact, to accept or reject his teaching.

It is, however, an unprecedented phenomenon, left to the nineteenth century and to a Christian Church, to witness a body of men, who deserve the highest praise for earnestness and devotion, holding an entirely distinctive set of views, and yet calling themselves by the name of another body who, as decidedly has rejected those views. Certainly a few loopholes were discovered by ecclesiastical lawyers, to warrant sharp men of business, who did not fear public opinion, to avoid the plain, obvious meaning of the original documents of the Church. But that earnest-minded men of God, should ever avail themselves

of such flaws, will remain one of those things which ordinary Churchmen, unaccustomed to the fine distinctions and sophistries of religious controversies and theological problems, fail to understand. We can honour, though we do not agree with, such men as Cardinal Newman, Cardinal Manning, and Lord Ripon, who, seeing the almost ludicrous inconsistency of stopping in one Church, while accepting the teaching of another, have at a great personal sacrifice to themselves, pushed the views they held to their logical outcome, and disconnected themselves from the Church of England. Regarding those who hold the same views, but shrink from nobly following their example, all I can say in their favour is, that the earnestness and devotion they exhibit is worthy of a better cause; and that the natural sequence of such conduct in religious men, who of all should be *sans reproche*, will, in the future, be a great spread of infidelity, among those who will, rightly or wrongly, attribute their line of action (which men of the world cannot justify) to ulterior motives, such as the loaves, fishes, and prestige of a richly - endowed national Church.

I will not dwell long on the fact that, in almost every case in which a legal decision has been given, it has been against those, who are endeavouring to avail themselves of the legal loopholes of former centuries. The atmosphere of the law-court must ever be somewhat uncongenial to the spiritually-minded child of God. At the same time, one must admit that the

Church at large, though she may have suffered a little in the stirring up of bad blood and the engendering of strife, is indebted to the two great litigation societies. There were certain points on which the law was in a very unsatisfactory state, or, at all events, on which the public knowledge of the law, needed enlightening. Where uncertainty exists there must ever be confusion, and a very slight deviation from the path of truth may lead to danger. Now that the law has been declared, though possibly the present generation of litigants may not like it, yet in the future, it may be hoped that the law-abiding, law-loving Englishmen, with few exceptions, will be content to abide under its shadow in peace.

PART II.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SACRIFICE, ALTAR, CHANCEL, AND VESSELS.

THE distinctive teaching of this new body, seems to centre almost entirely, around the Holy Communion. That simple meal, celebrated so unostentatiously in an upper chamber in Jerusalem, with such an entire absence of pomp and ceremony, is now called by some a "commemorative sacrifice." The table is called "the altar," and the meal itself an "unbloody sacrifice," while the clergyman is called "a sacrificing priest." When administering the Sacrament he has to adopt a special vestment, in order to denote that he is offering up a sacrifice, and with a view of doing special honour to the *sacred* feast.

It is not difficult to see, that there is a close connection between the ideas some Christians have of sacrifice, and the sacrifices mentioned in the Old Testament, commanded by God to the Jews. Some Christians of the nineteenth century are like those

of the first, confusing the old Jewish sacrifices, which were purely typical, with those of the Christian dispensation. New wine is being forced into old bottles, with the same disastrous results. When we turn to the Old Testament, we find a great deal about sacrifice. There were burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, heave-offerings, thank-offerings, peace-offerings, and many others. Some were with blood, some were without blood. Sometimes the offering was an innocent animal, sometimes it was the first-fruits of the soil. But all spake of Him who in some form or other was the great antitype. The very altar on which the sacrifices took place, was typical of that cross on which the Lord of Glory died. The high priest typified Him who offered up Himself a sacrifice at Calvary; the assistants to the high priest doubtless typified those who should believe on Christ, and be enabled to offer the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving. The garments they officiated in were typical of the glorious righteousness of Christ, the beauty of holiness, and also an indication that the priest officiated not by right of any intrinsic holiness of his own, but in right of the holiness of Him who was typified.

When, however, we turn from the Jewish to the Christian dispensation, we find that all this is changed. These types pointed to Christ, the great antitype, who has fulfilled them all, and has, as our Prayer Book says, "made there (by His one oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient

sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." The mere fact of the abolition of the old Levitical priesthood is quite sufficient to indicate that the ceremonial law has been abolished. As the apostle says, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. vii. 12). This does not refer to the moral law, which is as binding now as ever it was; but to the law of ordinances, which passed away with the Levitical priesthood. A Christian priesthood has been substituted, and consequently a new mode of worship. The Christian priesthood cannot introduce any ordinance that is not to be found in the New Testament. The Jews required something different from the Christian. As a nation, they were being weaned from the multitudinous practices of the heathen, out of whom they had come. God gave them many ordinances. God's people, however, have advanced a stage in the knowledge of God since the law of Moses was propounded, and, consequently, having a better understanding of the nature of God, they do not need so much the numerous divinely-appointed ceremonies. The many external ordinances of the Jewish people have been reduced to two in the Christian Church, commonly known as the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. May not each child of God look forward to the time, when faith shall be lost in sight, and we shall no longer need external aids to stimulate our faith?

Dr. Jacob remarks on this subject, that "the Christian religion, as taught by the apostles, was, in its external aspect, strikingly distinguished from Judaism, and from all other surrounding religions, by its having no *priesthood*, no *sacrifices*, and consequently no *altars*. For this Christians were reproached by their Pagan neighbours, who could not imagine a religion without such appliances, and who sometimes on this account looked upon them as atheists; while a Jew found it a stumblingblock in his way, when Christianity demanded a surrender of his cherished confidence in his sacerdotal and sacrificial rites. Hence in an evil hour Christians sought to remove this ground of contumely, which was in reality their glory; and Justin, in his 'Dialogue with Trypho,' is in some degree drawn in that direction. A weak and fatal yielding to this temptation of surrendering the divine simplicity of the gospel, for the purpose of making it more attractive, and imposing, to those who were without, soon after this, as we shall see, was followed by its natural but most deplorable results."

In the New Testament there are many references to sacrifice, but it will be found that all of them are either to the old Jewish sacrifice which was typical, or to the spiritual sacrifice which was to be offered up by each child of God. They are alluded to in such passages as, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which

is your reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1). "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. xiii. 15, 16).. The sacrifice under the Old Testament dispensation was a *material* one; the sacrifice under the New Testament dispensation is to be of a *spiritual* nature. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were offered by the Levitical priesthood. The sacrifices of the New Testament are to be offered up by the whole Church. Each individual believer, male or female, bond or free, young or old, is called upon to show forth God's praise, not only with their lips, but in their lives, by giving themselves up to His service, and walking before Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. The Bishop of Winchester beautifully puts it thus: He says—"The Christian Church is said to be 'a holy priesthood;' and is 'to offer up *spiritual sacrifices*, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' These spiritual sacrifices are—(1) The sacrifice of prayer and praise: 'By Him let us offer the *sacrifice* of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.' (2) The sacrifice of alms and of the first-fruits of our substance: 'To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased.' (3) The sacrifice of ourselves to the Lord: 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies

of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' "

The Lord's Supper is a meal in commemoration of a great sacrifice which once took place. Dean Stanley well points out, that it can no more be called a commemorative sacrifice, than the Waterloo banquet can be called a commemorative battle. The banquet commemorates the battle, and the Lord's Supper commemorates the greatest sacrifice that this world has ever seen. Those, however, who advocate the idea of a commemorative sacrifice, ingeniously strain the words, " This do in remembrance of Me," to mean, " Repeat this sacrifice," or " Offer up this sacrifice." This idea is a very old one, lately revived. It was deliberately rejected by the Church, as far back as the last revision of the Prayer Book. Bishop Thirlwall mentions that, when Bishop Cosin proposed to insert as a rubric, " the priest shall offer up and place upon the table . . . bread and wine (although this offering up must have been of unconsecrated elements, and, therefore, different from the Romish doctrine), yet *Convocation rejected the proposal.*" Bishop Thirlwall says, " The Church has deliberately rejected the doctrine. For in the *first* Prayer Book of Edward VI., every expression which implied a real and proper sacrifice had been carefully weeded out; in the *second* Prayer Book every allusion to an altar, or to a material sacrifice, was finally god rid of; the

word altar thenceforward disappearing from the Liturgy."

The Bishop of Winchester has a very able bit on the one sacrifice, in contradistinction to the *many* sacrifices that some profess to offer up week by week. He says—"The repetition of the Jewish sacrifices, St. Paul tells us, resulted from their imperfection. If they could have made 'the comers thereunto perfect, then would they not have ceased to be offered?' But 'it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.' Hence 'every priest,' under the law, 'standeth *daily* ministering and offering *oftentimes* the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But He, after He had offered *one* sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God. . . . For by *one* offering He had perfected FOR EVER them that are sanctified.' And the conclusion which is drawn, is that, as Christ has obtained remission for our sins, and 'where remission of these is there is no more offering for sins,' therefore we may 'draw near with a true heart, with a full assurance of faith;' plainly, as being assured, that the one sacrifice once offered has been fully sufficient for all our sins.

"Now, nothing can be plainer than this argument; and if it proves anything, surely it must prove, that to believe in the repetition of Christ's sacrifice is to believe in its imperfection. And if it be imperfect, in what a state are we! we, who are lost sinners, and who have no hope but in the efficacy of the atoning

blood of Christ. If that atoning blood be not of infinite value, we are of all creatures most miserable. But if it be of infinite value, and if the sacrifice be perfect, and 'able to make the comers thereunto perfect;' then the Apostle assures us, that it cannot need, that it will not admit of, repetition. . . . All combines to assure us, that the one Sacrifice has been once offered, that it admits no addition, that it can never be renewed. It is once for all, as man's death is but once. It is once and for ever, as God's judgment is one and to eternity."

Lest in the future any expressions should be misunderstood and strained to imply a sacrifice, the Church, as Bishop Thirlwall has remarked, removed the word "altar" from the Prayer Book in the year 1552 A.D. It will now be found that the word "Lord's Table" is used throughout the Prayer Book, where before the word "altar" was found. If there is no sacrifice, naturally an altar is not required, and in the same way if an altar is not required "a sacrificing priest" is not needed. The Dean of Peterborough says—"She does not regard her ministers as sacrificing priests standing before an '*altar*.' Her whole Liturgy is framed on an opposite view. *It is a witness and a protest against sacerdotalism.* She knows of no earthly priests except presbyters or elders. She knows of no earthly sacrifices but spiritual sacrifices, and even these offered, not by the minister for the people, but by the whole congregation through the voice of the minister. 'And

here *we* offer and present unto Thee ourselves.' *She knows no material altar:* the very word has been expunged from her vocabulary. She bids us come to the Holy Table to partake of the Supper of the Lord, not to offer a sacrifice. She teaches us that there is but one atoning sacrifice, even that of the Lamb of God once offered. She teaches us that there is but one High Priest, even He who offered Himself without spot unto God upon the altar of the Cross. This is the teaching of the Church, and this is also the teaching of Scripture."

We often speak of the words "hymenian altar," as a figure of speech having reference to Hymen, the god of marriage. Whether it is wise to do so or not is another matter, but the great bulk who use the expression, merely make use of it as a poetical allusion. Nothing more is meant by it than by the expression "erecting a family altar," thereby meaning having family prayers at home. But the same cannot be said of the use of the word "altar" in reference to the Communion Table. It was wisely and carefully removed from our Prayer Book, as it was thought that by leaving it there the idea of a sacrifice would have been encouraged. The Rev. Hely Smith, in his little book, "Audi Alteram Partem," which goes very fully into this subject, gives the two following quotations. Bishop Musgrove (Hereford) says:—"Neither ought we in sacred things to use words at random, as if language could never lead to error. Whereas, irreparable mischief

has often sprung, and may arise again, from the misapplication of words. For instance, the Church, in her Communion Service, speaks of 'The Table,' or 'The Lord's Table,' or 'The Holy Table,' employing, not by accident, but designedly, one or other of these terms no less than sixteen times; whereas, some never speak of the same but as 'The Altar,' a name which our liturgy seems to have carefully eschewed, because it was felt how much influence there is in a name; and still more, because 'an altar' implies a sacrifice, and a sacrifice implies an expiation offered up by him who ministers. A fancy which the Service-book of our Church does not recognise or allow, lest such recognition should imply or countenance the suspicion of any diminution in the value of Christ's death."

Archbishop Grindall, in his instructions to churchwardens, wrote as follows:—"Churchwardens should see that in their churches and chapels all altars be utterly taken down, and the place where they stood paved, and the wall whereunto they joined whited over and made uniform with the rest, so as no breach or rupture appear; and that the *altar stones be broken and bestowed to some common use.*"

When men have a pet theory to contend for, it is wonderful how passages from the Scriptures are brought in, without the slightest regard to the context. The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, points out to the Jews the analogy that exists between their typical religion, and that of the

Christian faith. The Jews had but *one* altar, and that was in the temple at Jerusalem. The apostle says, "We Christians also have an altar, the antitype of the Jewish altar." That altar was the cross of Christ at Calvary, on which the Lamb of God suffered. The Jews had day by day, to be continually repeating their sacrifices, but in the Christian religion, "once for all" was the sacrifice made. It is a remarkable thing that the same chapter which contains the words, "We have an altar" (Heb. xiii. 10), within a few verses, shows the *spiritual* nature of the sacrifice of the Christian priesthood. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But to do good and communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

If we take the New Testament only for our guide, we find no directions for a material sacrifice, for an altar, or for a priesthood. If, however, we turn to the Old Testament, though we find very distinct instructions for all three, yet we find the following injunction: "Take heed to thyself, that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest; but in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, and there shalt thou do all that I command thee" (Deut. xii. 13). We know that the place selected for the altar of sacrifice was the same place where the great sacrifice took place.

The one altar at Jerusalem was doubtless typical of the cross on Calvary on which our Saviour offered up Himself. The Jews had *one* altar, and the Christian Church has *one* cross. The Jews might meet together out of Jerusalem for worship, but they were not allowed to sacrifice elsewhere. They were distinctly forbidden to multiply altars throughout the land. If our Communion Table is not an "altar," is it wise to call it one? Such language, to say the least, is misleading, and calculated to lead the ignorant and the young astray. Our Saviour says, "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones" (Luke xvii. 2). But if the Christian Church does possess an altar, where is the authority from the Word of God to erect one in each of the 15,000 parishes of the United Kingdom?

I remember once hearing a story of a bishop who, having heard that a certain clergyman was acting illegally, purposely paid his church a visit so as to satisfy himself. The bishop said nothing in the church; but when he got to the vicarage, remarked that it was illegal to have a crucifix on the communion table. The clergyman assured the bishop that he had not got a crucifix on the communion table of his church. "But," said the bishop, "I have seen it." "No, my lord," said the vicar; "I think you are mistaken." The bishop

said, "Let us go again to the church, and I will show it to you." The bishop walked straight up to the crucifix and said, "Why, there it is on the table." "No," said the vicar; "I think you are mistaken," and producing a knife, he passed it *under* the crucifix, showing the bishop that it was not on the table, but that it was fastened by means of a bracket out from the wall behind, so as to appear to be on the table, and yet not to infringe the law forbidding it to be there.

It has always struck me that a certain class of men, who utterly repudiate the idea of being "sacrificing priests," or of calling their communion tables "altars," act like that clergyman. They make the table to appear as much like an "altar" as possible, and then leave the people to find out for themselves that it is not an altar. A reredos behind a table may be of two kinds. One kind makes the chancel simply look very nice, and adds a certain ornament to the building. A reredos, however, of another kind, acts very much in the same way as the bracket did to the crucifix. It makes that appear to exist which has no reality. Many Roman Catholics have been deceived by the way in which our communion tables are made to appear like altars, and have been led to think they were in a church of their own persuasion. Much as one may deplore it, one has no right to object to an altar in a Hindoo temple, in a Roman Catholic, or in an Irvingite church. It is only what one ex-

pects to see. To say the least, however, it is painful to see clergymen of a Church, that has carefully removed the word "altar" from her Prayer Book, lend themselves to this kind of thing, which has all the appearance of what in trade would be called "double dealing." That many do reconcile it with their conscience in some way I have no doubt, but how, I must say, I cannot understand. To preach against the *suppressio vari* from the pulpit while sanctioning it in the chancel, will, if it does not multiply altars throughout the land, inevitably have that result as regards multiplying infidelity.[1]

There is an idea prevalent that the chancel of the church is more sacred than any other part of the building. This is a notion which finds no support whatever from the Prayer Book. It seems to originate from the fact, that it is the custom to celebrate the Lord's Supper in that part of the building. This, however, is nothing more than a custom, though, undoubtedly, a very good one, as it would

[1] I cannot understand the moral sense of some who seem to think that a wrong thing when done with a religious object ceases to be evil. The horse-dealer who manipulates the teeth of an old animal so as to prevent it showing its age, the carriage-builder who paints and varnishes an old vehicle, and sells it as new, the fruit-seller who colours unripe fruit to make it appear otherwise, are called dishonest, and are sometimes even denounced from the pulpit. Is the clergyman alone to be justified when he makes a thing appear other than it really is, merely because he does it under the garb of religion? When we blame the Jesuits for openly acting on the principle that it is justifiable to do evil that good may come,—they might be apt to retort, "Physician, heal thyself."

be inconvenient to have the Lord's table in that part of the sacred edifice where the Prayer Book says it should be. The rubric on the subject says, "The table, at the communion time, having a fair white linen cloth upon it, shall stand in the body of the church, or in the chancel." The "body of the church" was the place appointed, and the chancel was originally only allowed as an alternative.

Some even contend, that because the clergyman is directed to read the Ten Commandments from the communion table, that therefore the Church has given her sanction to the belief that the chancel is more sacred than the body of the church, or otherwise, they contend, why should not the clergyman remain in the reading-desk? The real reason is that the Ten Commandments form a part of the Communion Service, and that service is always performed by the clergyman standing at the communion table. Originally, owing to the fact that the rubric directs the table to "stand in the body of the church," the clergyman had to proceed exactly in the opposite direction to read out the Ten Commandments. If anything, there is a disadvantage in the minister proceeding to the communion table under the existing arrangement, which is that the voice is not so distinctly heard. This, however, was never contemplated by those who originally drew up the Prayer Book.

Be this as it may, there can be doubt that the Prayer Book gives no authority whatever to the

notion, that one part of the sacred edifice is more holy than another. The teaching of the New Testament, as well as the teaching of the Prayer Book, in contradistinction to the Jewish doctrines, is that

> "Where'er they seek Thee, Thou art found,
> And every place is hallowed ground."

Archbishop Laud used his influence to get the communion table removed from the body of the church to the chancel. As it was found to be far more convenient in that part of the church, there it has remained ever since. The rubric, however, remains as a witness to the fact that it is left there as a matter of convenience and expediency, and not from any superstitious ideas of sanctity entertained by the Reformers for different parts of the church.

Some contend that, because the highest act of Christian worship is performed in the chancel it acquires a sanctity that the rest of the church cannot claim. People are, of course, entitled to indulge in any speculation they like on the subject. Enough for the great bulk of Churchmen, that not a single sentence in the whole Prayer Book gives any support to such a theory. On such a principle, those who have family prayers in their dining-rooms, might contend that therefore that room was more sacred than their drawing-rooms, or that a bedroom, in which the Holy Communion had been administered to a dying person, was more sacred than a bedroom in which the Holy Communion had never been ad-

ministered. The majority of thoughtful men will see little distinction between this sort of sanctity and that which the Mahommedan attaches to his sacred prayer-carpet, on which he kneels when performing his devotions, and which he regards with a holy reverence.

Those who plead so earnestly for the sanctity of the chancel as a rule, contend strenuously for the sacredness of the vessels, used in celebrating the Lord's Supper. To such an extent is this superstitious regard paid, that some clergymen make it a rule that none but "priests' hands" are to touch the cup and plate, even in the vestry when they are being cleansed. These vessels are the material instruments associated with much spiritual blessing, and to a certain extent one can understand the feelings of some earnest souls in regard to them. There can be no advantage in shocking the feelings of any, even of the weakest brethren. But, at the same time, it cannot be too clearly pointed out that such feelings of veneration for the mere material things associated with religious worship, has a great tendency to drag down a spiritual form of worship to the lower level of mere superstition.

Neither in the Bible, nor in the Prayer Book, do we find the slightest encouragement to such an idea, as sanctity being attached to a silver cup or plate. In the New Testament we find that the Jews, in their more degenerate days, attached a great deal of importance to the washing of cups and platters, a

sentiment which was rebuked by our Saviour, who said, "Behold, all things are clean unto you" (Luke xi. 39–41). In our Prayer Book all reference to the subject is entirely omitted, although, as we know well, the Church of Rome had a regular Altar Ritual of which this formed a part. When we are told that it would be desecration for a layman to touch the holy vessels, which must only be handled by priests, one cannot but be reminded of the Brahminical priesthood, who would dash to pieces the lota or drinking vessel, if once touched by any one outside the priestly caste. It is sad to see such things in India, but sadder still to see educated Christian clergymen going back to these beggarly elements and finding pleasure in them.

It is astonishing how a certain class of minds dwell on minutiæ of ritual that ordinary minds never contemplate, attaching an almost ludicrous importance to trifles. The Word of God simply tells us of the "breaking of bread," and "the cup," of which we are only once informed contained the "juice of the grape." Whether the bread was unleavened bread or not, we do not know. Whether water was mixed with the wine or not, we are not informed. The probabilities are, that, as the Jews used unleavened bread at the passover, to remind them of the fact that when coming out of Egypt they had not time to finish baking their bread, our Saviour used unleavened bread; and for the reason that the Jews usually mixed water with

their wine at the passover, the probabilities are that our Saviour did the same thing.

Our Reformers wisely avoided these disputed points, seeing that they called attention away from the main thing at issue. What is in ordinary use now corresponds to that which was in universal use in the time of our Saviour. Whether the bread be the black bread so much used in Russia, or the white bread used in England; or whether the wine be the weak diluted mixture of the East, or the stronger wine used in the West, can be a matter of no importance.[1] The whole controversy was cut short by the one brief rubric. "And to take away all occasion of dissension and superstition, which any persons hath or may have concerning the bread and wine, it shall suffice that the bread be such as is usual to be eaten; but the best and purest wheat-bread that conveniently may be gotten."

Some minds speculate, as to whether or not any of the bread and wine blessed by our Lord remained over, and if so what was done with it; as if the Word of God dealt with trifling details, that might be looked for in a book of Hindoo mythology. Our Reformers very wisely declined to speculate on trifles of this kind. They simply said—"But if any remain of that which was con-

[1] It may interest some readers to learn that one eminent bishop in India, being in a place where wine could not be obtained, used beer, while brandy and plain water have frequently been resorted to by missionaries as a substitute for wine.

secrated, it shall not be carried out of the church, but the priest and such other of the communicants as he shall then call unto him, shall, immediately after the blessing, reverently eat and drink the same." Being "reverently" partaken of by the communicants would not shock the feelings of any, and, at the same time, it had the advantage of preventing bits of consecrated bread or drops of wine being carried away for superstitious purposes to act as charms against sickness, in much the same way as Hindoos now carry about bottles of sacred Ganges water. The one desire of the Reformers seems to have been to set at rest all such speculations as to what ought to be done with the water that is used in washing out the cup; and what is to be done with the napkin with which the cup is wiped out; and what shall be done with the water with which the napkin is washed; and whether this duty ought to be entrusted to the hands of a common layman or should be done by a priest.[1] Such trifles call away attention from the main thing, and are to be deeply deplored. The desire of the Reformers was that all things should be done decently and in order, so that

[1] Dr. Jacob mentions that in olden days a place, properly named *infundibulum*, was sometimes called *piscina*, a name originally belonging to the baptismal font. It was usually made in the side-wall of the chancel, as may still be seen in some old churches, or in modern imitations of them. In some Ritualistic churches the ablution of the vessel is considered an important ceremony, and the priest makes an *infundibulum* of his own body by drinking the water!

not even the most fastidious could be shocked, or the least superstitious encouraged.

The more carefully one studies the Prayer Book, and reads the writings of the Reformers, the more struck one is at the entire rejection of all superstitious teaching, on the subject of the Holy Communion. It is interesting to compare our Prayer Book with that of the Church of Rome, and to see what a marked contrast exists. The Reformers had been brought up from childhood, to use a book of devotion which spoke of an "altar," "an altar cloth," "wafers," "wine mixed with water," "vestments," "lighted candles on the altar," "a sacrifice," &c. The Prayer Book which they produced dropped the word "altar," and substituted for it a "table not of stone;" the words "altar-cloth" are not once mentioned, but in its place we find a "fair, white linen cloth." The bread to be used was such "as is usual to be eaten," instead of unleavened bread and wafers; even the wine mixed with water, a very harmless custom in itself, was given up, lest any should attach a superstitious importance to it. The simple, plain, white surplice was substituted for the gorgeous vestments. The lighted candles[1] were

[1] I have heard of clergymen having as many as one or two dozen candles on the communion table, and defending their action by contending that as the law only forbids *lighted* candles, it cannot be illegal to have candles which are not lighted! Whether their legal advisers are correct or not in their law is not for me to say. Such an evasion of the obvious intention of the Reformers may be very *clever*,

abolished from the communion table, except when light was required, which can hardly ever be necessary now that our churches are so well lighted with gas. All reference to a material sacrifice was omitted, and in its place the spiritual sacrifice of prayer and praise was substituted. Even the posture of kneeling, to which some importance might be attached, was most carefully explained in a rubric to mean, that no adoration was intended to the simple elements.

In conclusion, one cannot but feel what a relief it is to realise that we are not left to the ever-changing thoughts of men, with all the accompanying traditions which human teachings must inevitably bring about. It seems as if the Great Tempter was bent, on turning aside men's thoughts from the vital realities of Christianity and the work of Christ in the salvation of souls, to the petty trifling accidents that accompany its progress. The late Bishop Wilberforce wrote as follows:—"My heart is sick of seeing the attention and heart of the Church turned aside to such trifles, when we have untaught multitudes and unconverted millions, and scores and scores of unbelieving rationalists, to whom we do not preach Jesus Christ crucified."

We have the sure testimony of Him who is the "same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He has

but I question if many laymen will be found who consider it very *honest*. It is a principle which comes perilously near the *suggestio falsi*.

given us His Word, and that alone must be our guide in all the difficulties of life. How carefully we should guard that Divine Word from human corruptions, additions, and subtractions. The slightest deviation from it may land us in fearful difficulties. There still are some who would put the clock back, and I suppose such will always exist, but we may rest assured that the more we cultivate the spirit of the great Founder of the Church on earth, and the spirit of the Reformers of the Church of our country, who sought to follow in the footsteps of the Master, the less we need fear them. May He who hated sin, but loved the poor sinner, teach us to cultivate that spirit which yearns over the poor wandering one, yet carefully guards itself from being contaminated by evil influenes.

In speaking of the heresies of the past, one cannot but feel that one ought to speak gently. Men who have erred from the truth, have often been holy men of God. Not only in the Bible, but in Church History, are there many instances mentioned of how good men, have been gradually drawn into sin and into error. When a man—however good may be his intentions at the time—leaves the Word of God and the teaching of the Holy Spirit, for vain speculations and traditions of men, how easily may he be carried away! How easy for us to look back and smile at the erroneous teaching of a bygone age! Possibly, however, had we been born

and brought up under past erroneous systems, we, too, might have imbibed the strangest doctrines.

As every young officer on joining his new corps, hears with pride of the noble deeds done by that regiment in days of yore, and so gradually imbibes the spirit that will make him in the future emulate the heroes of the past, so may every Englishman learn with pride, the noble part played by the Church of his country in the dark magical age to which I have referred, in the conflict with ignorance, superstition, and heresy. While loving that particular branch of the Church of Christ to which we, as individuals, belong, may we learn to cultivate that large-hearted catholicity which enables us to act on the apostolic precept, "Grace be unto all them that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth."

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